



Russell R. Standish
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THE SEPULCHRES ARE WHITED

The term “Whited Sepulchres” was well understood by the Jews. When Jesus applied this to the leadership of the Jews it led to great hatred. The authors, while not targeting leaders, have nevertheless written a book which gives evidence of the tragic spiritual bankruptcy in many of the forms and practices now common in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The authors have a devoted loyalty to God's remnant church. This leads them to place the evidence of widespread apostasy, deepening worldliness, and insubordination against God, before the leaders and members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is their hope that there will arise such a recognition of the abominable state we are in that in deep repentance and heart searching we will repent and turn again to the ways of God.

We are at the end-of-the-end of probationary time. If our church is to receive the full outpouring of the latter rain, there must be a return to truth and righteousness. This alone will provide the unity that God can honor with His Spirit. This book is written to stimulate such a reformation in our ranks.



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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Pastor Austin Cooke who has stood nobly for the faith once delivered to the saints. He has faithfully fulfilled his ministerial vows in upholding truth and condemning error. He has borne severe persecution for his fidelity recognizing that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." 2 Timothy 3:12. We salute this evangelist whose faithfulness has been a testimony to our own souls.

THE SEPULCHERS ARE WHITED

The title of this book has been carefully selected. In no case is it suggested that any person mentioned in this book is a whited sepulcher. Christ alone could make such a judgment of men. The title refers rather to many policies and practices within our church, some of which are addressed in this book. On such matters it is possible to compare these policies and practices with the sure word of inspiration.

**THE
SEPULCHERS
ARE
WHITED**

Chapter 1

At Crisis Point

In the mid 1980s Russell accompanied Pastor O.K. Anderson on a visit to Sydney Adventist Hospital, Sydney, Australia. There they spent a brief period in conversation with Pastor Larry Laredo, the public relations director for the hospital.

Their exchange of views centered upon the matter of the deterioration in faith and standards within our church in Australia. Larry, a kindly gentleman, thinking to alert Russell to an attack upon his reputation, turned to him and in confidential tone asked, "Did you know, Russ, there are even some who call *you* a C.B.?"

The letters C.B. were an abbreviation of the term *Concerned Brethren*, which had been used to describe a group of very dedicated senior pastors. They had early perceived the dangers of the teachings of Dr. Desmond Ford at Avondale College and had urged his removal from the post of chairman of the Theology Department. By the mid 1980s Ford was no longer a minister of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. But the fidelity of these pastors to their ministerial vows, in which they covenanted before their God to preserve the faith, was repaid by the heaping of scorn upon their heads by many denominational leaders and a significant number of laity in the South Pacific. The appellation, *Concerned Brethren*, thus had become a term of derision.

Larry appeared to be unprepared for Russell's reply. "Praise God," he said, "aren't you concerned?" The church of God today has large numbers of Concerned Brethren, many of them ordained ministers of God's church, but it is difficult for such persons to feel free to express their deep concerns, for to do so is to jeopardize one's ministry and even one's membership within the church.

But matters are now so grave that it is time to stand and be counted. Laypeople have done their best, retired ministers have protested, and men and women in dedicated self-supporting work have raised the alarm; but where are the voices of ordained ministers, holding current credentials and in current denominational employment, to be heard? Those voices are heard extensively in whispers, but where are those who will "cry aloud, spare not"?

We believe the time is long overdue when pastors who are holding current ministerial credentials and are denominationally employed must rally in open defense of God's faith.

In 1978 we sat in the office of Pastor Kenneth Wood, editor of the *Review and Herald*. He had fearlessly defended God's truth in a series of splendid editorials. In response many senior denominational workers, particularly in the educational field, had sent him negative letters and some had called for his removal as editor.

In light of these events, we questioned Pastor Wood concerning his sentiments upon learning that there was a strong threat to his work. His reply has remained in our hearts: "If I am not prepared to lose my office in defense of the precious truth of God, then I am not worthy of that office," he replied. We immediately sensed that God was calling each pastor and church worker to such a commit-

ment. There and then we asked our Lord to accept our pledge to such a standard. How we wish that we had always lived up to that pledge in the years that followed! But it is now time, time to stand for a reformation within God's church, for as never before our beloved church is wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. Revelation 3:17.

How we love our church! God's remnant church! The church to which He has entrusted the preaching of the last warning message ever to reach the ears of sinful men! We have lain awake praying for our church throughout the world, but inevitably it has been the churches in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States that have been the objects of our most agonized prayers. Unless we call a halt to rampant apostasy immediately, it appears that these churches are doomed to utter demise. In many areas of these nations, error and sin arouse no solemn warnings from our pulpits. Incredibly it is the preaching of the distinctive doctrines of our faith which arouses the ire of many ministers and leaders. Feverish efforts are undertaken to prevent the flock from hearing the messages of righteousness. No criticism of these preachers of righteousness seems so foul that it may not be levelled against the faithful bearers of truth, and against those who choose to listen.

Too long have these loyal Seventh-day Adventists stood such abuse. Surely it is time to press all God's pastors to serve as authentic Seventh-day Adventist leaders, humbling themselves before Jesus, condemning error, seeking the lost, restoring the wayward, and supporting the faithful. To stimulate the ministry and church leaders to such noble service in the name of Jesus, is this work dedicated.

Russell feels freer to write a book such as this than do many others, for, unlike some who share his perspectives, he

has never been ill-treated in God's work. He has served under a succession of warm-hearted Union presidents; John Keith (Trans-Australian Union); Daniel Guild, Ralph Watts, Wendell Wilcox, Robert Heisler and George Johnson (Southeast Asia Union); Harold Calkins (British Union). Indeed, he has ever had a close and warm relationship with his fellow ministers. Further, he is serving in a post that brings him wonderful joy and satisfaction. He experiences no dissatisfaction whatsoever in his ministry. He could not ask to work with a finer team of Christian leaders than we have in Southeast Asia. Thus this book does not emanate from the minds of disgruntled workers, but simply from men deeply concerned at the fearful trends evident in God's precious church. Colin, in self-supporting ministry, shares Russell's concerns.

We love God's church. As teacher, physician, and pastor Russell has devoted his entire life in service to it. Likewise Colin, as teacher, psychologist, administrator, and pastor has dedicated his life. It is truly God's church. Yet had not the servant of the Lord assured us that our church would go through to the end we would fear for its continued existence. So great is the apostasy, often at high levels of our church, so widespread the abuse of the flock of God who stand for His pure truth, so rapid the spread of error and the acceptance of appalling standards, that a true minister can but tremble for his church.

The title of this chapter is not simply a matter of perspective. Documentation of the alarming trends in our beloved church is all too easy to provide. Yet few voices are raised to cry, "Halt!" Many whisper their concerns, but in the councils of the church few dare stand and nobly defend the faith. Curiously, it is common within our church com-

mittees to hear men speak with great feeling when defending their territories or their positions. Such selfish speeches somehow provoke little opposition. On occasion these men get their own selfish ways because of their arrogant stance, and can often look forward to "promotion."

But dare someone stand selflessly for a higher level of Christian conduct or defend a doctrine under attack in our colleges, he invariably brings upon his head the scorn and distrust of others. In many ways we appear to have lost our sense of values.

To remain in cowardly silence in such circumstances is rank disloyalty to our God. Today numerous church members have all but lost their faith in church pastors and church leaders, counting their silence as consent to the raging apostasy, lowering of standards, and mistreatment of God's flock rampant among us. When ministers acknowledge their deep-seated concerns, admit that the genuine concerns of the flock are valid, and openly defend the faith of God, such laypeople find encouragement. They are heartened when they recognize that the ministry and church leadership are not totally united in support of apostate practices. The few ministers resident in Australia who have declared their position on the side of truth, have prevented a large number of the most loyal church members joining the growing separationist movement in that country. Yet rather than to express gratitude to these men, some in leadership have consistently berated their valiant efforts to retain the credibility of God's church.

God warned His ministry,

Ministers of the gospel sometimes do great harm by allowing their forbearance toward the erring to degenerate into toleration of sins. *The Acts of the Apostles*, 504

Yet consistently the members of the ministry fail to rebuke sin. Some fail to do so from a mistaken view that such rebukes are “unloving.” Others, believing that we will sin till Jesus comes, and that sin is no bar to salvation, feel little need to undertake an unpopular ministry of reproof. It is tragic that a few offer no rebukes because they are engaged in the practice of similar sins. Still others remain silent because of political expediency and a desire to rise to “higher” positions in the organization.

But God forthrightly states:

He who has blunted his spiritual perceptions by sinful leniency toward those whom God condemns, will ere long commit greater sin by severity and harshness toward those whom God approves. *Ibid.*

✓ This book will document the veracity of this prediction.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is presently in a state of gross darkness. This fact is the most dramatic sign that Jesus is coming soon, for

The coming of Christ will take place in the darkest period of this earth's history. *Prophets and Kings*, 717

Paul prophesied concerning our day:

And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 2 Thessalonians 2:8-10.

This passage refers primarily to the Papacy. We do not infer for a single moment that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is Babylon. We have the word of the Spirit of Prophecy which testifies against such an identification. But we would be utterly blind if we failed to acknowledge that vast numbers of our people hold to darkness in preference to light.

It is rank darkness that leads men and women to promote unscriptural doctrines such as original sin, salvation in sin, the inability of the Spirit-filled soul to obey the commandments of God, the unfallen human nature of Christ, the fallibility of Scripture and of the Spirit of Prophecy, the entry of Christ into the Most Holy Place at His ascension, the view that Creation week occurred over ten thousand years ago, the denial of the remnant status of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the acceptance of lowered social, entertainment, and moral standards, the permissibility of using alcohol in moderation, the practice of charismatic forms of worship, the restriction of the ministries of certain persons, the hierarchical structure of God's church, the acceptability of worldly adornments, abortion upon demand, ordination of women, acceptance of the practice of homosexuality, and many other practices and beliefs of which a pure and holy God does not approve.

Such views were totally foreign to our spiritual forefathers who founded our church upon God's Word, not worldly principles. Yet these false doctrines and practices are firmly accepted by tens of thousands of church members, including many ordained ministers, and are freely taught in many of our institutions of higher learning. We should not be surprised as we study the state of God's church at the time of Christ's first advent. When we recognize that Satan is

laboring with one hundredfold intensity now as compared with the era of the first Advent (see *Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 3, 328), the fearful attack upon God's church and the gross deterioration in its doctrine and standards can be understood.

In writing this book, Russell does not shelter in self-supporting work, nor do we write from the protected status of retirement, nor from concealment as laymen. Many in these areas have long cried aloud, God bless them. But the time has arrived when men exposed to the severest penalties that our church has at its disposal should, nevertheless, stand and be counted on the side of truth and purity within our church.

In order to give credibility to the documentation presented, we have used the names of persons where they have openly publicized their stances. Anonymity would be futile in such circumstances and would only serve to cast doubt upon the veracity of the material presented. Where materials have been made available privately, we have decided to maintain the anonymity of the sources, rather than to cause them embarrassment.

Chapter 2

God's Church

The church is God's fortress, His city of refuge, which He holds in a revolted world. Any betrayal of the church is treachery to Him who has bought mankind with the begotten Son. From the beginning, faithful souls have constituted the church on earth. *The Acts of the Apostles*, 11.

God's church is precious to Him. Enfeebled and defective as it may appear, the church is the one object upon which God bestows in a special sense His supreme regard. *Ibid.*, 12.

Believers who have no love for God's church can hardly consider themselves Christlike, for surely true believers will love that which Jesus loved.

In today's confused age, the nature of God's church is frequently misunderstood. Some believe the church of God consists of His faithful people in every Christian denomination, and indeed in non-Christian religions. Others assert that it is the totality of believers within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Still others acknowledge the church as being the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. A fourth view, rarely stated expressly but increasingly accepted in practice, is that the leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are His church. Which of these four definitions is correct? The

answer is that compelling evidence from inspiration indicates that God refers to His church, in various circumstances, in any of the first three definitions presented. The only totally false definition is the last one. Yet increasingly church leaders and church members are acting as if this fourth definition overrode all others.

Those of us who are ordained as deacons, elders, or ministers should remember the holy task to which we have been called.

In every age the Lord has had His watchmen, who have borne a faithful testimony to the generation in which they lived. These sentinels gave the message of warning; and when they were called to lay off their armor, others took up the work. God brought these witnesses into covenant relationship with Himself, uniting the church on earth with the church in heaven.
Ibid., 11

There have been numerous attacks upon God's church. Satan is unwearied in his efforts to embarrass and minimize the witness of God's true church. The testimony of Scripture reveals that in these last days the Seventh-day Adventist Church is God's church. Yet today this church is indeed "enfeebled and defective." Still, in His love, God bestows His supreme regard upon it. We as His ordained workers must offer no less.

However, many today are greatly perplexed as they consider the rapidly expanding teaching of apostasy in our colleges and throughout our churches, and the disregard of true Bible standards within the church. Perhaps the majority of ministers, elders, and deacons, many of them sincere in their convictions, perceive loyalty to consist of refraining from pointing out these matters since that would be con-

strued as criticism of God's church. This attitude has another appeal to the less sincere, in that it is a very comfortable one. It causes the person to develop a reputation among his fellow church members as very loyal and stable within God's church. Thus it has appealed to those who would make rapid progress within the denomination. Others, on the other hand, believe that loyalty to God's church demands that apostasy and the lowering of standards be challenged, and that God's precious truth be set forth in clear contrast before His people.

This second position is far more difficult for ministers and lay leaders to maintain, since inevitably it leads to accusations of disloyalty and of indulgence of a critical attitude. Frequently, it is these faithful ministers who are singled out even by men in church leadership as being those who are causing division within God's church. Such charges are very upsetting to those who simply wish to uplift the old doctrines and standards of the church, which are based upon a thorough examination of God's Word and a plain "thus saith the Lord."

The great question confronting Seventh-day Adventists today in the light of the almost universal entry of apostasy and false standards within our midst, is "What constitutes disloyalty to God's church?" Is it, in fact, disloyal to expose these problems before God's people when one is motivated by the desire to bring about a reformation? In the minds of many Seventh-day Adventists today, such actions do constitute disloyalty. Many mistakenly believe that silence on such matters is beneficial to God's church and its welfare. This belief is particularly true when those advocating apostate doctrines or lowered standards hold leadership positions within God's church. But again we pose the question "Are those who undertake this ministry of reproof really the

disloyal ministers of God's church? Was Jeremiah disloyal when he brought reproof against apostate Judah? Was Isaiah disloyal when he revealed all the inconstancy within the kingdom of Israel? Was John the Baptist disloyal to God's church when he described the leaders of that church as a "generation of vipers"? Matthew 3:7.

The question facing us as Seventh-day Adventists today is "What does constitute disloyalty within God's church?" Surely charges of disloyalty should rather be levelled first at those who, ignoring Bible mandates, are subtly seeding the errors of apostate Protestantism into God's church, and promoting activities contrary to Bible standards. Second, those who, knowing of these errors, yet measure their words and silence their concerns, lest they be regarded as disloyal to God's church, must also come under the charge of disloyalty. Never does God demand silence at the time of apostasy. God's command to each of His faithful ministers is

Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. 1 Timothy 5:20.

If silence were the appropriate response to apostasy, then none of the prophetic books of Scripture would have been written, nor would the epistles.

Perhaps the greatest danger imperiling God's church today is the growing view that to express concern for its lowered standards, and to make earnest calls for repentance and reformation, is detrimental to the peace and harmony of the church.

It is a delusion of the devil that the tree of silence bears the fruit of unity. . . . Those who would promote unity by avoiding discussion usually mean that those who differ from them should remain silent. . . . It is essential that agreement be reached, not through the

easy shortcut of official "pronouncements," but through co-operative study and personal conviction under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. *Problems in Bible Translations*, Review and Herald, 1954, 123.

Rather, many are seeking an experience of euphoria while the pressing evils within God's church are ignored, and God's people give themselves over to a superficial form of worship which is full of "joy and love" and which totally ignores the deeper issues confronting the flock. Yet Scripture indicates that the seal of God will not be given to men and women who defile God's house by irreverence and ecstatic forms of worship. Rather we are told that God orders His angels to

set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. Ezekiel 9:4.

Sister White states that this verse does not refer to the abominations in the godless world, but to those in the midst of the church. See *Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 5, 210, 211. Indeed the whole context of Ezekiel 9 confirms this fact.

Clearly, those who truly love God and His church and who are truly loyal to our heavenly Father, and to the one object of His supreme regard, will not excuse apostasy nor silence their concerns, even if the apostasy is promoted by men in position of authority within the church. There has never been a period in earth's history when God has asked His people to support that which is contrary to His plain word, simply on the basis that a church leader has promoted it. So important is truth, and so vital is the presentation of God's truth, that even if the General Conference in full

session were to vote a doctrine contrary to the plain word of Scripture, it must not be obeyed. The Bible and the Bible alone determines true doctrine and faith.

But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority—not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain “Thus saith the Lord” in its support. *The Great Controversy*, 595.

Teach the people, He [Christ] said, “to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” The disciples were to teach what Christ had taught. That which He had spoken, not only in person but through all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament, is here included. Human teaching is shut out. There is no place for tradition, for man’s theories and conclusions, or for church legislation. No laws ordained by ecclesiastical authority are included in the commission. None of these are Christ’s servants to teach. *The Desire of Ages*, 826.

This important fact cannot be overemphasized. We call our pastors, elders, deacons, and faithful laypeople to uphold the truth of God, irrespective of the circumstances and without regard to the opinions of men who would guide us in apostate pathways.

Chapter 3

The Middle Road

In the current crisis of faith in our church, many have flattered themselves that they are admirable church members by declaring that they adopt a middle-of-the-road posture, being neither loose liberals nor fanatical conservatives. It is a comfortable posture. Usually such persons, if truth were told, simply lack a firm conviction. In secular circles it is possible that they may even be described as spineless. These people drift along the easy road, taking their cues from church leaders, and changing their stances in accordance with the whims and dictates of men in leadership, rather than from the unvarying commands of God. Such church members provide a fertile environment for papal-type dominance.

The Bible never speaks of three classes of people. There are only the saved and the lost. Christ spoke of the wheat and the tares. On another occasion He referred to the sheep and the goats. Those who wish to include a third category are going beyond Scripture. Christ does speak of the right and the left, but in a very different sense from the manner in which these terms are being used in God's church today.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

. . . Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand,
Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Matthew 25:34,41.

Those on the left hand represent the lost, and those on the right, the redeemed.

These terms do not possess the political connotations which we often associate with them. Those on the left are not confined to liberals, and the conservatives are most certainly not represented by those on the right. Scripture reveals that both liberals and conservatives will be found on Christ's left. If this were not true then unrepentant Sadducees (the liberals of Christ's day) and Pharisees (conservatives) would be saved.

It is true that in God's church today both classes abound. The liberals are found in large numbers destroying the distinctive doctrines of God's church, and lowering virtually every Christian standard, growing ever bolder in their ecumenism. These liberals uphold abortion on demand, see no wrong in homosexual practice, attack the sanctuary doctrine, advocate the drinking of alcohol in moderation, enjoy movies, are unfaithful in their tithe paying, and regard adultery as a matter of minor importance, and Scripture as less than accurate. Liberals are in the vanguard of virtually every denial of doctrine and weakening of standards. They suffer from the illusion that the broad way leads to life eternal.

Conservatives, on the other hand, believe that our doctrines are correct. They do not approve the lowering of standards. Some may even be as meticulous with their service to God as were the Pharisees of old. Just as the Pharisees in Christ's day were more dangerous than the Sadducees, so too are the conservatives in our day. None are more harsh in

their treatment of God's flock than are the conservative elements in our church.

Russell received a letter from one Union president in which he, no doubt truthfully, asserted that he and others

have been on the evangelistic platform preaching our historic truths and prophecies. — Letter written to Pastor R. R. Standish, August 1, 1989.

It cannot be denied that this leader is a conservative. Yet he shelters the liberals in his region of responsibility, and hands down the harshest of measures against those who desire to uphold precious truth and condemn the growing preaching of error among us.

In an article in *The Adventist Review*, January 1, 1990, it was suggested that there were four classifications of Seventh-day Adventists. These, it was stated, consisted of

1. Regular Adventists — This group believe in the doctrines and are faithful stewards. They believe the writings of Sister White but are unsure of the relevance of some sections. "They are the doers of the congregation supporting their pastor and making things happen." They constitute the majority of church attenders.

2. Traditional Adventists — These are doctrinal enthusiasts, rigid in their life styles, believe they are the only true Adventists, accept Sister White's writings fully. They see the rest of the church as having departed from the faith.

3. Intellectual Adventists — Emphasize rational thinking and challenge traditional positions. "Logic and scientific evidence guide their thinking about the authority of the Bible and Ellen White." They see Sister White's major value as a devotional writer.

4. Cultural Adventists — No longer living as conventional Adventists despite “believing” the doctrines. They attend church when it is convenient. They “do not look, act or think like the typical Adventist. . . . They have moved into a new secular world, and the church does not hold their interest or meet their felt needs.”

The author of this analysis suggests that

we need to come to the place where we appreciate our differences. While regular Adventists will always form the broad, dependable center of our church, the other three groups also make important contributions to the life of the church. The church would be poorer without the idealism of traditional Adventists. In many ways they are the conscience of the church, somewhat akin to modern prophets. Intellectual Adventists guard against sloppy thinking, so that the church does not take positions contrary to logic and common sense. Cultural Adventists keep us in touch with society, so that we do not become Seventh-day Antiques. They force on us a cultural re-examination of church values. Ibid.

Such an assessment falls far short of God’s holy standards. Contemporary with Jesus, all four classes were found in profusion in the Jewish community. The Regulars were those who looked to the scribes and priests to determine their faith and held no firm Bible convictions themselves, accepting only those doctrines which were cherished by the religious leaders. They looked to men rather than to God and His Holy Word as the source of their faith. The Traditionalists were the Pharisees, the Intellectuals were the Sadducees, and the Culturalists, the unregenerate publicans and sinners.

Not one of these classes was the least benefit to God's church. Indeed these very people cried for the blood of our Saviour. Unrepentant, they will do no better to His followers at the end of time. They are the tares which God in His love, has permitted to grow with the wheat until the harvest, lest some, who will sincerely repent, be lost. But short of such repentance, these groups will contribute no more to the presentation of God's final message than did their "spiritual" forefathers to the founding of the Christian church. We pray that God will alert His people to the need to seek Him in repentance. This awareness is our need and that of every reader, for all of us must confess that we have been found in one or other of these classes and only Jesus can rescue us from any one of those lost conditions.

In Christ's day no group upheld with greater care the Sabbath, the law of God, and strict moral standards, than did the Pharisees. In the eyes of most believers they were destined for heaven. Yet these same men crucified the Son of God. They were totally oblivious to their fallen state. Christ declared that they boasted,

If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Matthew 23:30.

They truly believed their boast, while planning the death of One far holier than any slain by their forefathers. In planning this act, which surely must rate as the most diabolical in the entire history of this earth, these conservatives fully believed that they were fulfilling God's will and protecting His church.

Their mistake was to imagine that God's church was themselves, the identical mistake of many conservative lead-

ers in God's church today. God's church is His flock, of which church leaders are only a small fraction. Thus, while the Pharisees believed that they were protecting God's church, they were, in fact, merely protecting their own personal positions and authority. It was not the church of God which Jesus threatened, but the usurped authority of the Jewish leaders.

Similarly today, many of our church leaders mistakenly believe that by defending their own positions of authority they are protecting God's church. They are quite wrong in this assumption. We recall a few years ago being asked in New Zealand why we were preaching there without church approval. The question distressed us, for we recognized that the church leader who posed it imagined that he had the right to grant such approval, perhaps the sole right. Since we had responded to a request to preach to God's humble flock in Auckland, we had the most telling of church approval.

It is no secret why many conservative leaders harbor liberal elements in their midst. As leaders, we invariably find that we can easily work with liberals. They are flexible, for they lack convictions. Many of them are personable, and they present a face of tolerance. But even liberals find their tolerance stretched beyond its limits when confronted with the old Adventist faith and standards. Their espousal of the virtues of doctrinal plurality usually does not extend to truth. They will tolerate any number of erroneous views on a doctrinal issue, but not Bible truth, for truth serves as an implied rebuke to those who scorn it. This rebuke liberals cannot abide.

It is true that more and more liberals are being elected to leadership positions. Once again we see a parallel to Christ's day, when the Sadducees usually held the office of the high

priest. Furthermore, we can see the same sham among liberal leaders as was evident in Christ's day.

In numbers the Sadducees fell far below their opponents, and they had not so strong a hold upon the common people; but many of them were wealthy, and they had the influence which wealth imparts. In their ranks were included most of the priests, and from among them the high priest was usually chosen. This was, however, with the express stipulation that their skeptical opinions should not be made prominent. On account of the numbers and popularity of the Pharisees, it was necessary for the Sadducees to concede outwardly to their doctrines when holding any priestly office; but the very fact that they were eligible to such office gave influence to their errors. *The Desire of Ages*, 604.

Never has history repeated itself with such faultless exactitude as in this matter. This inspired passage needs to be studied and restudied by those who would understand the trends of leadership in God's church today.

Like the apostles we cry out,

Who then can be saved? Matthew 19:25.

The Scriptures supply the answer:

And there shall in no wise enter into it [heaven] anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. Revelation 21:27.

These indeed are neither liberals nor conservatives, but God's remnant.

Many humble servants of God who are neither pliant liberals nor authoritarian conservatives have been labelled as

being on the radical right wing of the church. Such categorization often serves to defame the very souls whose witness and Christian love and dedication God's church desperately needs at this time. In any organization those possessing radical right wing views are invariably extremely dangerous. They are most undesirable, but some of God's faithful followers are so cast within our church. However, God will have a different evaluation of the work of these sacrificing servants.

On the other hand, the term *liberal* often has positive connotations. Yet within God's church liberals are very dangerous.

It is a matter of deep distress when we reflect that the "radical right" of the 1990s were the humble pillars of God's church in the 1950s. Nothing reflects the damaging decline of God's church more than the use of the appellation, *radical right wing*, to describe sincere level-headed followers of God's Word.

It takes little effort to be a bold liberal, and little more to be a courageous conservative. These stances we can take in our own strength. But it takes an infilling of God's omnipotent power to be a member of the remnant.

Chapter 4

Cry Aloud

This book is not written from a negative standpoint. It is written by two men who possess a lifelong passion for our church. It is not written in order to spread bad news. The bad news is already well distributed around the world. Instead it is written to emphasize the deep convictions of the authors that there is good news--the news that the escalating apostasy and rejection of standards, evident in our present-day church, can be halted under God's power if we will but rise up and seek to halt it. It will take firm resolve, dedicated effort and divine power. And reform must commence at the grassroots of the church. Purity can, and will, be accomplished. It must be achieved! God *will* have a people who are made after His image.

Some may question our right to write a book such as this. Rather should people question our right to remain silent at such a time of crisis. Frankly, we could fairly be accused of cowardly silence for far too long, and we could offer no valid excuse.

In fact, we have been charged with being weak in our protest against apostasy in God's church. One such charge in print stated,

We are very sorry to see in No. 23, an appeal to help the Hartland project [Evangelism in Africa]. It is

well known that the Standish brothers fail to admit the real level of apostasy in the SDA organization. — Letter written by “JL” to *Anchor* magazine No. 25, January 1990.

It is indeed possible that in our love for God’s church, we have erred in this way, although we trust that the muting of concern has not been based upon fear of damage to our reputations, should we openly stand for right and purity.

In the past, when matters similar to those detailed in this book have been cited, unthinking men and women have objected upon the grounds that such revelations expose the authors to the charge of judgmentalism, but such objection is not valid. God demands that His people condemn open sin. Those who believe that God will set matters right in His own perfect time-frame are correct. But frequently such persons overlook the fact that God invariably calls upon His faithful servants to act as the catalysts for such reform. We have been admonished that

If the leaders of the church neglect to diligently search out the sins which bring the displeasure of God upon the body, they become responsible for these sins. *Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 3, 269.

Lest some see this responsibility as only the work of leaders, Sister White states:

If wrongs are apparent among His people, and if the servants of God pass on indifferent to them, they virtually sustain and justify the sinner, and are alike guilty, and will just as surely receive the displeasure of God; for they will be made responsible for the sins of the guilty. *Ibid.*, 266.

Still others, of a pessimistic turn of mind, suggest that nothing is achieved by such manuscripts, except the deepen-

ing of division within the church. The half-truth is that as earnest calls are made for reform, those who reject them cast their hearts further from those who accept the calls. But we must bear in mind that those who left the principles and practice of the pure faith created the initial schism, and it is they who deepen it, by repeated rejection and failure to heed counsel presented from God's Word.

To suggest that nothing is achieved by calling men and women to reform in the light of apostate practices, is a myopic viewpoint. No doubt for many years men and women offered such assessments to reform-minded persons in Eastern Europe. During those years of Communist despotism, those making such assessments must have felt justified by the evidence. But in the ultimate it was the very men and women who had risked reputation, advancement, scorn, prison, and life itself, who turned the tide of Communism in a most spectacular way.

In any case, is the failure to achieve immediate goals a valid reason to refrain from standing by the side of one who is unjustly treated? Does not human compassion demand that, irrespective of the outcome, we stand by the one so abused, in his moment of need?

Further, may we not halt other abuses of power by our stand? Might we save other noble souls from a similar fate by drawing attention to each abuse? Might such protests prevent worse apostasy and a deeper disregard of standards? Might our protests assist at least to hold the line? Such matters are impossible to evaluate in full, for they are hypothetical, but evidence indicates that genuine protests do assist to stem the tide of apostasy and of injury to the upright.

Also overlooked by many, who unthinkingly undervalue the merits of a work such as this, are the humble men and women in God's church whose courage has been severely tested by what they have observed. When ministers attempt to gloss over wrongs as if they had never occurred, or imply that they are of minimal import, many souls totally lose faith in God's church and drift away. On the other hand, the people are greatly encouraged when pastors will stoutly defend truth, denounce error and make strong efforts to bring the erring ones, whether of high reputation or low, back to the path of rectitude.

Some wonder whether names should be cited. It is a natural concern. But when matters are known far and wide, what is to be gained by anonymity, when the vast majority of the readers full well know to whom the writer is alluding? Further, if a man is misleading God's flock, the sooner he is exposed, the fewer will be those who are harmed by his actions. When the president of Andrews University was arrested on a charge of homosexual solicitation in 1983, we were attending the annual meeting of Adventist Services and Industries in Alabama. The guest speaker was the president of the General Conference, Pastor Neal Wilson. Very properly, before the hundreds in attendance, Pastor Wilson revealed the salient features of this sad episode. He did not conceal the name.

When Dr. Desmond Ford was defrocked, his name was scattered, quite rightly, throughout our literature. One entire issue of *Ministry magazine* (October, 1980) was given over to Dr. Ford and his apostate views. Also, when a layman, Dr. Donald Davenport, was declared bankrupt, causing severe financial embarrassment to our church; his name and his

financial dealings were published far and wide in denominational literature.

When the president of the Lake Regional Conference misused God's tithe in the mid-1980s, the *Adventist Review* quite rightly detailed this misdemeanor and accompanied the article with a photograph of the errant church leader.

Paul also exposed the apostates of his day:

And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus. 2 Timothy 2:17.

For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world. 2 Timothy 4:10.

Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil.
2 Timothy 4:14.

Most important of all is our Saviour's command to raise our voices against abuses within His church, whether doctrinal or concerning the broad sweep of moral issues. Within the covers of this book will be found numerous divine directives in confirmation.

We write about our church with great love and tender affection. We have not lightly or carelessly taken up our pens. There has been much soul-searching, considerable counsel with senior pastors and trusted laymen, and much prayer and searching of God's Word. We have recognized our own frailties, our own personal needs. But our love for God and His church impels us to cry, "Halt!" We dare not remain silent any longer when godly souls are being abused for their faith by leaders within God's church, when apostasy is advancing like a raging torrent, when standards have been so lowered, in practice, that they are barely distinguishable from the godless world about us. It is in the spirit of love that we write.

Chapter 5

Devalued Scriptures

Theologians destroyed the Jewish church and they have destroyed virtually every church of Christendom. There is no reason to believe that they will achieve any other result in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Indeed, all evidence suggests that theologians are systematically producing that very consequence right now. It is difficult for the younger generation to imagine a day when intending ministers of our church did not study theology, but in our lifetime that was so. The great evangelists who built up our church scorned theology, and rather immersed themselves in God's Word.

Today our college libraries carry numerous tomes, written by men who would not recognize Bible truth, were it staring them in the face. Misguided professors compel future preachers of truth to absorb this faith-destroying error. No man has ever learned truth from the study of error.

The experience of Nathanael is worthy of study:

If Nathanael had trusted to the rabbis [Jewish theologians] for guidance, he would never have found Jesus.
The Desire of Ages, 140.

So it is in the present day, when men trust theologians. Many of our young evangelists are trained to trust theologians; subsequently they find their ministries impotent. They fail to bring men and women to Jesus. Yet rarely do our leaders reason from cause to effect.

In the 1930s the church, for the first time, accepted state accreditation for its colleges. The Annual Council of the General Conference in 1935 discussed the matter. Many of the delegates saw the terrible dangers in such a decision. However, the need of the College of Medical Evangelists (Loma Linda University) dominated the thinking of the brethren. Believing that in order to maintain accreditation for the medical school it was essential to have college pre-medical courses accredited, the Annual Council reluctantly agreed to Pacific Union College and Emmanuel Missionary College (now Andrews University) seeking accreditation.

The reasons were twofold for limiting permission for accreditation to two colleges. First, the church did not, in principle, support a policy of worldly accreditation of its schools, for it recognized that requirements would be pressed upon these institutions, which would turn them from their God-ordained roles. History has confirmed that these fears were well founded. Our pioneers recognized the enormous advantages to be maintained by rejecting worldly accreditation, for they could then listen to but one voice--that of God. No greater blow to the standards of academic excellence has ever been sustained by our educational institutions than this action, for inevitably it led our colleges away from the one Source of all infallible knowledge. Even worse, this action sounded the death knell of spirituality in our educational institutions.

The second reason that lay heavily upon the hearts of our leaders, causing them to restrict the number of accredited colleges, was the knowledge that a large number of professors would have to be sent to worldly institutions to receive graduate degrees, in order to satisfy the desires of the accreditation committees. They sensed that some of these men would bring back to our colleges the error they had studied in worldly institutions. Their premonition was correct. Further, it was recognized that large sums of God's money would need to be expended for this undesirable education.

Despite all these disadvantages, eighteen months after the floodgate was opened, every Seventh-day Adventist college in North America had sought accreditation. None was prepared to be regarded as a "second-rate" institution. But what a price has been paid for this faithlessness! Today many Seventh-day Adventists argue, citing compelling evidence, that not one of our North American colleges is close to the paradigm, despite the fact that some of the faculty members do attempt to uplift God's standards.

Had one of those colleges eschewed accreditation, it would be today the premier Seventh-day Adventist college in North America--a source of wonderment to the church and to the world.¹

It was not long before our colleges were pressed to increase the number of faculty members in possession of a

¹For a full discussion of this matter see *Keepers of the Faith* by Dr. Colin D. Standish and Dr. Russell R. Standish, Hartland Publications, P.O. Box 1, Rapidan, Virginia 22733, U.S.A. Some of the most prestigious universities in the United States scorn accreditation, yet their degree holders are eagerly sought.

graduate degree. Initially, great care was taken to send only those persons who had proved themselves strong in faith. But as the pressures from the accrediting bodies mounted, it was not possible to maintain the early standards. Before long, men and women were sponsored for graduate study more on the basis of academic potential than of spiritual maturity. Others were appointed to posts without thorough evaluation of their spiritual commitment, simply on the bases of their possession of a relevant doctorate, and their membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Many who were unproved in the sphere of soul-winning, were appointed to posts on Theology faculties. Later, graduates in Theology were so unschooled in evangelism that it was found necessary to establish "Soul-Winning Institutes" in order to teach these men the elements of the calling to which they had devoted their lives. However, after sitting at the feet of theologians, many graduates had lost their zeal for evangelism and rather aspired to become armchair theologians.

Theologians do not, as a general rule, engender confidence in God's Word or His church. Vastly more young people find their faith destroyed by theologians, than are established in it. When a theologian in the Far East was questioned by one of his students as to why, in general, church pastors establish certainty, and theologians seed doubt, he replied, "Because theologians know more." It would have been more accurate to have replied that theologians know much less. A truly deep study of God's Word simply further establishes the faith and confirms with increased certainty its veracity.

Comparing today with the period of Christ's sojourn upon earth, the servant of the Lord stated:

With the open Bible before them, and professing to reverence its teachings, many of the religious leaders of our time are destroying faith in it as the Word of God. They busy themselves with dissecting the Word, and set their own opinions above its plainest statements. In their hand, God's Word loses its regenerating power. This is why infidelity runs riot, and iniquity is rife. *The Desire of Ages*, 258.

Frequently, theologians raise doubts concerning firmly established doctrines, doctrines which cannot be gainsaid by any true student of the Bible. Foolishly we listen to these men because we hold them in awe, admiring their academic qualifications. The resulting general uncertainty leads us to call a consultative committee to investigate the problem. Our inexplicable predilection is to call together in such a committee the very theologians whose faithlessness has initially generated the doubts. It is the usual practice to ignore the contribution of those church members whom God declares to be the people best able to understand His Word—lay-people guided by the Holy Spirit. Frequently, we exclude these valuable people from such discussions. As a result truth is often in short supply in the conclusions drawn by such committees.

Like the religious leaders of the past, many theologians within our church have not the least conception of Bible truth. Sister White records,

To the Pharisees the truth of God had lost its original significance and beauty. To them Christ's teaching was new in almost every respect, and it was unrecognized and unacknowledged. *The Desire of Ages*, 270.

Luther discovered the same situation in his day and set about correcting it. Many theologians and ministers in our

church, now denying the truth of the Scriptures, promote Luther as a man to emulate, yet they scorn to do the work he performed in this regard.

Luther saw the danger of exalting human theories above the Word of God. He fearlessly attacked the speculative infidelity of the schoolmen, and opposed the philosophy and theology which had so long held a controlling influence upon the people. He denounced such studies as not only worthless but pernicious, and sought to turn the minds of his hearers from the sophistries of philosophers and theologians to the eternal truths set forth by prophets and apostles. *The Great Controversy*, 126.

Oh, for some Martin Luthers around our colleges today! While the laypeople will be in the forefront of completing God's work, God has always called a few faithful pastors to herald reform. John Wycliffe, John Huss, and Zwingli were ordained Roman Catholic priests; Martin Luther was a Roman Catholic monk, John Wesley an ordained Anglican priest, and William Miller a Baptist pastor. Yet in the times of these men the majority of theologians forcibly attacked the truths they fearlessly declared.

Similarly today, the majority of our theologians look upon many old Adventist truths as if they had never been the very fiber of our faith. Doctrines such as the fallen human nature of Christ are in this category.

As a preparation for Christian work, many think it essential to acquire an extensive knowledge of historical and theological writings. They suppose that this knowledge will be an aid to them in teaching the gospel. But their laborious study of the opinions of men tends to the enfeebling of their ministry, rather

than to its strengthening. When I see libraries filled with ponderous volumes of historical and theological lore, I think, why spend money for that which is not bread? *The Ministry of Healing*, 441.

It is tedious to hear repeated excuses for a lack of understanding of Scripture expressed in terms such as "I am not a theologian." Such a situation is the great advantage which the layperson possesses. In general, it is theologians who do not have a true understanding of the Scriptures. When church members possessed a few grades of formal education they were deep students of the Word, and had a thorough knowledge of the faith. Now, when many in the church possess tertiary qualifications, they feel incapable of understanding God's Word. Such a situation opens the way for servile conformity, as in the papal system, to every word of the clergy, however discordant with Scripture the minister's concepts may be.

Most of today's pastors in the Western world find their ministries well nigh impotent. They find soul-winning very trying and success very limited. Young preachers have been given the unenviable task of evangelism, when they have no certain faith to preach, nor any understanding of the method of true evangelism. Naturally their ministries fail. As a result, many resign their God-given calling in despair. It is not their fault! It is the fault of senior pastors and church leaders who refuse to remedy the pitiful situations in our colleges, remove faithless theologians, and appoint faithful pastors to teaching posts.

And, to a great degree, theology, as studied and taught, is but a record of human speculation, serving only to "darken counsels by words without knowledge." *Ibid.*

We are also making a grave mistake in educating in our colleges of the Western world, ministers from the Third-World countries, where evangelistic success is found. One may rightly inquire into the thinking of administrators who, ignoring the pitiful success of ministers graduating from our seminaries in the West, direct successful pastors from overseas to these seminaries in order to "improve" their ministries.

In the 1980s, for example, Brazil, a nation where church membership increase is very rapid, sent three ministers to the Seminary at Andrews University in order to take graduate degrees there. The expenditure was high. Each returned and within a brief period of time was dismissed from the ministry because of aberrant teachings they claimed they had imbibed during their "upgrading."

Surely wisdom demands that we send Western pastors to those countries where there is success in evangelism, in order that they study at the feet of successful and faithful evangelists. Countries such as Costa Rica have taken the false step of inviting Loma Linda University theologians to present off-campus graduate courses to their pastors. The result has been a rapid decline in doctrinal integrity and the replacement of the faithful president, academic dean, business manager, and chairman of the Theology Department in our Central American Union College, in order to utilize in those posts men more supportive of the *New Theology* now rampant in their midst. The translation of Morris Venden's books, full of the *New Theology*, into the Spanish language also played a very important role. — source: Letter written by Pastor Hugo Gambetta, former chairman of the Theology Department, Central American Union College to Pastor Ron Spear.

Martin Luther perceptively saw the dangers of tertiary studies in educational institutions which are teaching error. We do well to heed his warning to eschew such institutions.

I am much afraid that the universities will prove to be the great gates of hell, unless they diligently labor in explaining the Holy Scriptures, and engraving them in the hearts of youth. I advise no one to place his child where the Scriptures do not reign paramount. Every institution in which men are not unceasingly occupied with the word of God must become corrupt. M. D'Aubigné, *History of the Reformation*, Book 6, Chapter 3 quoted in *The Great Controversy*, 140.

In 1976 Colin, then president of Columbia Union College, attended the Higher Education Convention at Andrews University. He was deeply grieved to hear a fellow college president argue that our colleges should reflect the eclectic beliefs and practices of the membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This college president asserted that our colleges are not responsible for the spiritual conversion of the students. His remarks received the almost overwhelming support of the presidents of our other North American colleges. The college president further insisted that the conversion of young people was the work of the elementary schools and academies. Colin's rebuttal was met with stony silence. With such leadership perspectives, it should cause little surprise that our colleges have become hotbeds of secularism, skepticism and worldliness.

The doctrinal position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has shown a steady deterioration. By 1888 many in our churches had become legalistic in their faith. God in His love gave us the pure message of righteousness by faith, but we rejected that. The emergence of the *New Theology* with

its emphasis on our inability to obey God's law, even when empowered by the Holy Spirit, was a natural consequence of this rejection.

Currently our church members and the ministry are finding this *New Theology* unsatisfying and sterile. Strangely, many are blaming this situation upon the few faithful senior pastors, claiming that there is no joy in their faith. In truth, the old true Adventist faith has ever been full of joy. It is the acceptance of the *New Theology* which invokes spiritual depression. Instead of returning to the true message of righteousness by faith, these spiritually depressed people are turning to charismatic activities. Thus there is a great turning to the church growth movement and the establishment of so-called Celebration churches. These sacrilegious and empty efforts to engender "joy" are also doomed to failure, for they are not inspired by our God.

Shortly many will become disenchanted with the unruliness of these churches and their conduct lacking true reverence for the great God of all. Nevertheless they will not, even then, return to the genuine joy and contentment of true righteousness by faith, but will follow the lead of their apostate Protestant neighbors, and seek solace in ritualism, sacramentalism, and ceremonialism. In this manner they will experience a sense of awe and solemnity, little understanding that they are preparing themselves to join the greatest bastion of ritualism, sacramentalism, and ceremonialism: the church to which our God has given the most powerful message ever given to sinners,

Come out of her. Revelation 18:4.

It is to the proclamation of this message that our God has called our church.

While we continue to train theologians and pass them off as genuine pastors, this call will not reach the level of a whisper, let alone a loud cry. For theology, using the historical-critical method of Bible interpretation, is perfectly designed to destroy every precept of Scripture. Perhaps the mind-set of theologians is best illustrated by the following parody upon their method of thinking, using a well-known nursery rhyme as a vehicle.

Verse 1: Jack and Jill went up the hill, to fetch a pail of water.

The word "and" presents some difficulties which are not apparent to the casual reader. There is considerable doubt in the minds of most scholars as to whether Jack was actually accompanied by Jill, in the sense that the phrase is intended to record a historical event.

In setting out upon this expedition, which was apparently undertaken for a specific purpose, or, at least, with some definite object in mind, it seems likely that Jack was stimulated to undertake this mission by a basic need for water. Since most functions in the home involving water, such as cooking, washing clothes, scrubbing floors, and so on, are normally undertaken by the distaff side, it is widely held that the force of "and" in this context probably means that Jack set out with a strong picture image of Jill in his mind, and several existentialist scholars also insist that her parting words were undoubtedly ringing in his ears.

Grosskopf, in his monumental essay entitled *Jackmitjilldamrotarung*, takes a contrary view. He dates this passage considerably earlier than is generally believed (somewhere between 404 B.C. and the 19th Amendment). On this basis he maintains that the hewing of wood and the drawing of water was exclusively carried on by women at this period, and that the words

"Jack and" are a gloss by some later copyist, and did not appear in the original manuscript.

"Went up the hill" is obviously allegorical. The ancients, although probably ignorant of Otis' First Law of Elevation ("what goes up must come down"), were well aware that the transfer of water by artificial means normally involves transportation from an inferior to a superior position (c.f. "The Old Oaken Bucket," "Down by the Old Mill Stream," etc.). Professor Gard de l'Eau, the distinguished hydrographer and mystic, suggests that this anabasis symbolized man's struggle to rise nearer to ultimate unity with the cosmic. The water, he continues, has precisely the same symbolism as the crossing of the Red Sea, the Jordan, Lindberg's trip across the Atlantic, and the landing on Omaha Beach in World War II, with which everyone is familiar.

Author unknown.

We may laugh at this parody, but in truth the work of many theologians is not one whit better than that here illustrated. In the case of the nursery rhyme it does not matter. But in matters of the Word of God we are dealing with life and death issues. The time has arrived for us to cease insisting that our trainee pastors study the foolishness of theologians in order to prepare for a life of service to God. Until we do, our young people will be best advised to eschew our theological training programs as did Jesus and John the Baptist.

Every theologian should carefully ponder the words of God addressed specifically to scholars:

Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god. The Lord

will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob. Malachi 2:11,12.

Times have not changed. The very problems which afflicted the scholars and thought leaders within God's church during Christ's earthly ministry, prevail in our church today. Few appear to recognize that

In order to be honored by Heaven, they must sacrifice the honor of men. If they obeyed the words of this new rabbi [Christ], they must go contrary to the opinions of the great thinkers and teachers of the time. *The Desire of Ages*, 242.

Because few of our theologians appear prepared to make such a sacrifice, they have lost contact with the truth of God. Like the Pharisees of old in whom

the truth of God had lost its original significance and beauty. *Ibid.*, 279.

modern-day theologians in our church frequently find that

Christ's teaching [is] new in almost every respect, and it [is] unrecognized and unacknowledged. *Ibid.*

God calls His people to a thorough knowledge of His word. In this search for truth, the humble layman will discover scant assistance from the great majority of our theologians. Let each theologian bent on destroying the Seventh-day Adventist faith contemplate the fate of those whose faith they are destroying, and also their own personal destinies, unless they humbly repent of this evil.

Many of the wicked were greatly enraged as they suffered the effects of the plagues. It was a scene of

fearful agony. . . . Loud, wailing cries were heard in every direction, "It was you who kept me from receiving the truth which would have saved me from this awful hour." The people turned upon their ministers with bitter hate and reproached them, saying, "You have not warned us. You told us that all the world was to be converted, and cried, Peace, peace, to quiet every fear that was aroused. You have not told us of this hour; and those who warned us of it you declared to be fanatics and evil men, who would ruin us." But I saw that the ministers did not escape the wrath of God. Their suffering was tenfold greater than that of their people. *Early Writings*, 282

We earnestly plead with our theologians and liberal pastors to give serious heed to this warning. Indeed, every minister, ourselves included, should contemplate the scene here described, for God, in His love, has not left us in ignorance.

Chapter 6

Devalued Credentials

In 1952 Russell was experiencing the joys and the challenges of his first year as a teacher in a little country church school in New South Wales called Mumblepeg. That year the South New South Wales Conference camp meeting was held in the town of Young. He was still only eighteen years of age as he attended that convocation of God's people.

It was at that camp meeting that Russell met Pastor Austin Cooke for the first time; Colin was to meet him at a later date. He was a handsome, dynamic evangelist in his midthirties. The South New South Wales Conference was a rural one, containing few large towns. The Conference president of the period, Pastor W.M.R. Scragg, father of a recent president of the South Pacific Division, was an able and energetic leader. He placed much emphasis upon evangelism, and in Austin Cooke he had uncovered an evangelist above the ordinary. Soon churches were swelling with souls in small cities such as Goulburn, Canberra, and Wagga Wagga as the mighty Adventist truths were preached with power and conviction.

In later years Pastor Cooke, a son of New Zealand, was appointed Division evangelist. He now resides in retirement near Avondale College, a man whose appearance belies the fact that he has entered into the eighth decade of life.

Always quick to defend truth, Pastor Cooke early perceived the error of Dr. Desmond Ford's teachings at Avondale College and the continual propagation of similar errors by theology lecturers in subsequent years. True to his ministerial vow to defend the faith, Pastor Cooke made open calls for the return to the teaching of God's truth in that institution.

Pastor Cooke had merely performed his rightful obligation as a true minister.

God has a church, and she has a divinely appointed ministry. . . . Men appointed of God have been chosen to watch with jealous care, with vigilant perseverance, that the church may not be overthrown by the evil devices of Satan, but that she shall stand in the world to promote the glory of God among men. *Testimonies to Ministers*, 52, 53.

Had Pastor Cooke's godly calls been heeded, Russell would not have received a letter from a final-year theology student from Avondale College which stated:

To be honest, the course had some hairy moments — like continually fighting a rearguard action with lecturers, not only for the historicity of the Spirit of Prophecy, but even for the accuracy of Bible inspiration. I have seen friends come in, strong message-men, and who are about to graduate, some believing more in Abraham Herschel and C. K. Barrett than E. G. White. — Letter to Dr. R. R. Standish, dated June 1989.

Pastor Cooke had not been alone in his cry for a return to doctrinal fidelity at Avondale College. Pastors such as George Burnside, O.K. Anderson, Arthur Jacobson, and Mervyn Ball still cry aloud and sustain the faith of thousands of dispirited church members. These men are all in the ninth decade of their lives, but God has preserved them to "cry aloud, spare not." Other pastors such as Tom Turner, Arthur Needham, and Ken Wright, a little younger, also fearlessly uphold truth. The voices of other senior pastors including former Union president John Keith, former General Conference leader Herbert White, former Conference president James Kent, former missionaries Elwyn Martin, Ronald Heggie, William Locke, and Walter Ferris, former evangelist Llewellyn Jones, and former chaplain Arthur Knight, have been silenced in death. The deaths of these men must have brought satisfaction to the young pastor who, in the midseventies, suggested that the church in Australia "needed more funerals." This evil comment was engendered by the desire to silence aged faithful voices lifted up in truth.

But should all these men pass to their rest before the return of our Lord (and God forbid that it be so), God will still find men and women who will not silence their concern.

It is difficult to imagine that the present church in Australia and New Zealand is the same church into which we were baptized in 1950. Some have suggested that any parent wishing to destroy the faith of his children could find no better Australian educational institution to meet this desire than Avondale College. It is tragic that this assessment could well be true.

How then could men such as Pastor Cooke remain silent in view of such apostasy? Yet, rather than upholding Pastor Cooke's voice, the Trans-Tasman Union withdrew his hon-

orary ministerial credentials in May 1989. There can be few instances of denominationally approved injustice greater than this action against a senior pastor. One has to go back to the General Conference treatment of Pastor M.L.Andreasen almost 30 years ago for a modern parallel. To use the sacred ministerial calling of a man as a political weapon defies analysis.

Yet throughout the world field many actions are taking place which have seriously devalued the ministerial credentials. It is imperative that these matters be published, lest worse evils prevail and in order that steps may be taken to redress the issues.

In the second half of the 1970s a far-reaching action was voted by the Annual Council of the General Conference. It had been found that taxation advantages for ministers could be granted to those who fulfilled most of the ministerial roles including the performance of baptisms, marriages, and funerals. In order to provide these taxation benefits to men who were not ordained to the ministry, the Annual Council voted an unprecedented policy authorizing unordained ministers to perform those duties formerly carried out solely by ministers who were ordained. Colin, who was a delegate to the session, voted with most of the overseas delegates against the proposal, which carried by a majority vote. This dangerous precedent has set a policy pattern whereby a number of similarly wrong actions have been taken in order to conform to government or legal regulations.

For almost a decade ordained ministers on the staff of Weimar Institute in California were issued ministerial credentials by the Northern California Conference. This was a wise policy, underlining the close cooperation that the orga-

nized work of God may have with the church's supporting¹ ministries. However, in 1987 this very proper arrangement was cancelled. Weimar Institute was led by Dr. Herbert Douglass. Dr. Douglass was no minor church figure. He had held major posts such as president of Atlantic Union College, associate editor of the *Review and Herald*, and book editor of the Pacific Press.

The reason for this action by the Northern California Conference was based upon an insurance technicality. Our conferences in North America now insure many denominationally employed workers for up to \$10,000,000 — a general indemnity coverage which necessitates the annual expenditure of many millions of dollars within the North American Division. The Northern California Conference took action to cancel the credentials of workers in Weimar Institute because that institution could not fund a similar insurance coverage for its employees. The Conference argued that if a legal suit were brought against Weimar Institute and it was not satisfactorily covered by insurance, the plaintiff might then sue the conference as the organization most likely to hold sufficient funds to meet his claim. The concept of ascending liability as related to lawsuits appears to send shivers up the spines of our people in the United States. Our legal officers apparently fuel these fears and insurance companies reap the profits.

In cancelling credentials held by Weimar Institute personnel, it was felt that the severance of this connection would make it almost impossible for a plaintiff to successfully use

¹ Many ministries formerly designated as self-supporting or independent now prefer to be known as supporting ministries, as this term more accurately describes their relationship to God's church.

the concept of ascending liability in a suit levelled against Weimar Institute.

But let us take a moment to reflect. Have we reached the point at which a pastor's ministerial credentials rest upon insurance coverage? Have we reached a point at which we permit unscrupulous lawyers wishing to locate what Americans term "the deep pocket," to dictate to us who is qualified to receive ministerial credentials and who is not? Many of these lawyers pursue their course energetically simply because they have arranged to take a percentage of the settlement as their fees. This rather distasteful procedure, which fuels the greed of a litigious society, is illegal in countries following British legal procedures.

We must sound a strong protest against any act which would permit such godless men to dictate to our church who may, and who may not, receive ministerial credentials. And we need not permit it. Our church is innovative. It is anticipated that the General Conference Insurance Office will shortly set up its own insurance company. At this time, it is imperative that the ministers in supporting institutions which cannot afford such heavy premiums be protected. Under no circumstances must we base a man's credentials upon the matter of insurance coverage. Incidentally, there is no record of a single Conference being sued as a result of an action being brought against a supporting ministry.

The Potomac Conference, which includes most of Virginia, Washington, D.C., and a little area in Maryland, continued the credentials of Colin, despite the insurance factor. God is good, and no litigation was brought against Hartland Institute, of which Colin was president, during this period.

However, Colin's ministerial credentials were not re-issued after December 31, 1989. The reason given was of

equal concern as in the case of Weimar Institute. In order to prevent chief executive officers and other leading executives receiving numerous perquisites (non-taxable benefits in addition to salary), the United States Congress enacted a law declaring it illegal to provide any employee of a company with a perquisite unless it is available to a minimum of eighty percent of the company's employees.

Always innovative, lawyers developed a means to circumvent this law. The scheme consisted of a company "dismissing" its senior management. These persons were then employed by a small company set up for the purpose, which then leased the top executives back to their original companies. The new companies easily met the law, for they paid one hundred percent of their employees the perquisites. On the other hand, the original company paid no perquisites and thus itself was not in breach of the new law.

The United States Congress countered by issuing Section 89 of the relevant act, which brought leased employees under the same laws as other employees. When this measure was examined by our lawyers in the General Conference, they concluded that a person working in a supporting institution, but receiving service credit and holding ministerial credentials, was in breach of Section 89. In other words, Colin was regarded as a leased worker in terms of the Act.

Because of this interpretation, the Potomac Conference felt it must terminate Colin's relationship with the Conference, thus depriving him of his service credit and his ministerial credentials. To its credit, the Conference Committee, led by Pastor Ralph Martin, did apply to the General Conference Retirement Committee for a variance on Colin's behalf, but was refused, it being felt that to grant such a variance

would endanger the legal standing of the entire North American sustentation fund.

Again we must analyze the situation. Our church had permitted, in this case, the United States Congress to determine the eligibility of a man for the receipt of ministerial credentials. This capitulation is surely a serious breach of the policy of the separation of church and state. It is an indefensible intrusion of the state upon the church and one which we must not condone. To do so is to further seriously devalue the status of ministerial credentials.

In reality it was within the province of the church to circumvent this matter. When Colin's employment with the Potomac Conference lapsed because of the enforcement of Section 89, the Potomac Conference could no longer grant him ministerial credentials. The reason was that only Union Conferences and Union Missions may issue credentials to persons who are not in regular denominational employment. Almost all retired pastors receive their honorary ministerial credentials from the Union Conference or Union Mission in which they reside. Thus the church could have fulfilled the law in this respect simply by issuing honorary ministerial credentials to Colin from the Columbia Union Conference.

But the question remains: Does the United States government have the right to enforce a law upon a church, effectively forcing it to dismiss one of its employees? Certainly not! Furthermore it was anticipated that the Congress would recognize this fact by placing within the law a clause which would provide a religious variance excluding chaplains and pastors from the demands of the act.

The board of Hartland Institute considered this anticipated provision. Undoubtedly many of Colin's functions at Hartland were of a chaplaincy nature, although it had never

been thought to designate him as such — there had been no need to do so. He was certainly not in full-time chaplaincy work, since he carried out many administrative duties. The board, quite rightly in the situation, voted to add the post of chaplaincy to Colin's duties. In effect, all this action did was to officially post him to a duty he had shouldered for the previous six years, and open the way for the church to fulfill the conditions of the anticipated religious variance.

It was thus quite surprising to receive word from the Conference indicating that Colin would only be qualified to be regarded as a chaplain if he

is truly the chaplain of the institution and . . . does not participate on administrative boards or in any administrative office capacity. — Letter to Mr. Hal Mayer, assistant to the president, Hartland Institute, from the vice president for administration, Potomac Conference, December 28, 1989

It so happened that Russell was on a visit to the United States at that time and made an appointment to meet Dr. Richard Brownlee, professor of Accountancy at the Darden School of Business Administration, University of Virginia, one of the nation's most prestigious postgraduate business schools. Dr. Brownlee, whose area of expertise is the field of retirement pensions, assured Russell that any religious variance in the act would not require that the chaplain abstain from administrative duties.

While Seventh-day Adventists believe in supporting every law enacted in their homelands, save those which conflict with divine imperatives, we have never taught the need to go beyond the demands of the law to our own detriment.

Parenthetically, in the Southeast Asia Union in which Russell presently serves, Pastor Sonchai, chaplain of Bangkok

Adventist Hospital, is a member of the Administrative Committee. Similarly Pastor Suan (Phuket), Pastor James Wah (Penang), and Pastor Jonathan Ng (Singapore) are each members of their respective Administrative Committees. Upon inquiry in the United States we discovered that there are still quite a number of Adventist hospitals who find their chaplains valuable in their administrative committees.

No doubt the reader will be interested in an ironic post-script upon this issue. In discussion with Dr. Brownlee, Russell discovered that Section 89 had been repealed in December, 1989. This fact was not known to the conference leaders.²

Never before has it been so urgent to take every step to honor and uphold our ordained ministers in self-supporting work. Under often trying and sacrificial conditions, at no cost to the organized church, these men and women soldier on, providing a ray of hope to some who otherwise would see no hope. They have their faults, but in general these men

² For many years Potomac Conference issued ministerial credentials to Elder Colin Standish. Dr. Standish was paid through a Potomac Conference courtesy payroll arrangement with Hartland Institute.

"Recently the General Conference passed a ruling, based on U.S. Government regulations, that this type of payroll arrangement could not be continued. Because we cannot continue the payroll procedure, we cannot continue to issue the credentials. This has nothing to do with our confidence in Dr. Standish; we have had and continue to have good relationships with him. Our action is based on the General Conference policy that credentials cannot be issued to non-employees."—Statement written by Pastor Ralph Martin, president of Potomac Conference, June 11, 1990.

and women are in the vanguard of preserving the truth once delivered to the saints. They bear misrepresentation, unfounded suspicion, financial stringencies, and a multitude of adversities that men like Russell in the organized work never know. Yet they do this for the love of their Redeemer and His church and in a deep desire to hasten His return.

On the evening of February 1, 1990, Colin returned to his office at Hartland. He was met by an incredulous Leonard Willett, business manager of Hartland Institute. Leonard had just received news from the Transportation Department of the General Conference that Colin had been voted permanent return to Australia. Leonard, thinking that Colin had secretly made such a request, was shocked. However Colin had NOT requested permanent return. The action of the General Conference had been taken without consultation with him, and while Russell was still negotiating the matter of Colin's credentials and service credit. To learn of such an action third hand was quite a surprise. One would have thought that a senior pastor would have merited greater courtesy than this action displayed.³

The time has come for God's people to demonstrate the true value of ministerial credentials. It is not good enough to use them as a means to show ecclesiastical displeasure toward a pastor; we can no longer tolerate the withdrawal of credentials at the behest of such trite matters as insurance considerations or government enactments. Ministerial cre-

³The decision to discontinue service credit for Colin had even more implications for him. He received the following letter from the office of the president of the South Pacific Division:

credentials acknowledge a man's call to the sacred office of the ministry and must never be permitted to depend upon issues of a secular nature.

When we were ordained to the gospel ministry, Colin on April 10, 1970, and Russell on December 6, 1980, we felt a sense of calling we had never previously experienced. At our respective ordinations, we dedicated our entire lives to the service of our God. Colin resolved that no longer would his profession as an educator be paramount in his life. Similarly, Russell covenanted with God that his profession as a physician would be secondary. Rather we would devote our entire being to God's service. We value those credentials and carry them wherever we go. It is a matter of great heartbreak to us to have them withdrawn for less than proper cause. Further, we cannot stand by in silence as we see other pastors, more dedicated than ourselves, treated shamefully.

It is true that some of these actions have been taken without the full implications having been studied. And here

Our policies . . . do not provide vesting for those leaving church employment before reaching retirement age.—Letter written to Dr. C. Standish by Pastor W. Scragg dated July 25, 1990.

Unlike most other Divisions, the South Pacific Division excludes from the retirement policy benefits all who leave denominational employment before retirement age. Thus Colin, who spent twelve years at his own expense receiving a tertiary education for his preparation to serve God's church, a church he served faithfully for 28 years before the loss of credentials, was, at the age of 56, notified that an action of the United States Congress had deprived him of any sustenance in the South Pacific Division upon retirement. By the grace of God, however, this situation has been reversed.

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we see the danger of placing such matters in the hands of men who are experts in fields such as insurance and the law, but have given little consideration to the sacredness of the call to a man to enter the gospel ministry. Scripture records that

No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. Hebrews 5:4.

As Paul declared, so does each faithful pastor,

He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry. 1 Timothy 1:12.

I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you. Colossians 1:25.

Chapter 7

Inflated Credentials

Just as money can lose its value by a deliberate act of devaluation, so too can it lose its real worth by the process of inflation. We hold a mint postage stamp issued in the 1920s. Its face value is twenty billion marks. Thus we can claim, with accuracy, to be multi-billionaires. But alas, as we check in any stamp catalogue, we discover that the stamp is valued at a mere few cents. So inflated had the German mark become in that period that billions of them were of little value. Indeed at one time in the 1920s, one American dollar was valued at 4.2 trillion marks. *Time*, June 25, 1990.

We too can seriously reduce the value of ministerial credentials, by a similar process of inflation. If we were to hand out ministerial credentials to every man, woman and child upon this earth, what would be their value? The same rhetorical question could be asked if we passed them, or their equivalent, to a vast number of unqualified people. But we are doing just that.

In October 1989, the Annual Council of the General Conference passed a resolution permitting North American women "ministers" who are ordained as church elders to

perform nearly every function of an ordained minister of the gospel, including marriages, baptisms, dedications, and funerals.

Such a far-reaching decision should never have been taken at an Annual Council where the number of delegates from the North American Division is totally out of proportion to their representation at a full General Conference session. At the 1989 Annual Council the number of delegates from the two largest Divisions in the world field, the Inter-American and South American Divisions, totalled five. There is a disturbing trend evident in our church at present. We now tend to take up virtually all of the most controversial issues at the Spring or Annual Councils and reserve those of a less controversial nature for the General Conference Sessions. Such a procedure is totally unfair to the world field, for, outside of North America, each Division sends only a handful of delegates to the Annual Council and fewer yet to the Spring Council.

Even more disturbing was the fact that this action, giving certain unordained women the right to perform ministerial functions in North America, was declared to be finalized by the Annual Council action despite the fact that many overseas delegates fiercely opposed the proposal. The matter of women's ordination, however, was not finalized but rather left open to future action.

Why is it, we may well inquire, that when a decision to lower standards is taken, the matter is finalized; while when issues clearly counter to Inspiration are raised, a future action contrary to God's Word is left open? We can rest assured that once the matter of women's ordination is approved in the future, as this Annual Council action makes almost inevitable, there will be provided no later opportunity

for God's people to reverse it. On many occasions since 1973, this issue has been raised in committees and councils, only to be rejected. But while it takes perpetual rejections to prevent its implementation, a single acceptance will insure its permanent establishment.

It will soon be asserted that it is a terrible injustice to women "ministers" for them to be "burdened" with ministerial duties when they are refused ordination to the gospel ministry. Already this inevitable argument is surfacing.

What have we done to women who have felt God's call and prepared for ministry?

questioned Pastor Gary Russell of Dowagiac, Michigan, in the *Adventist Review*.

We have returned to the idea of separate but equal. We have said, "Ladies, welcome to the ministry. In your pastorate you may baptize and perform marriages. You will even receive the same salary as a male licensed minister. But you will not be ordained. And without ordination, you will remain almost but not quite, a 'real' pastor." *Adventist Review*, October 12, 1989

Yet many faithful women Bible workers recognize that God has not called them to the ordained ministry.

After all it is not the act of ordination for women *per se* that I object to, but rather that I believe that ordination of women is inconsistent with the biblical principle of the male headship of the church, as described in the New Testament. Rosalie Haffner Lee, Bible Instructor, Carolina Conference cited in *Adventist Review*, October 12, 1989

When the General Conference subcommittee on Women's Ordination discussed this matter, at the suggestion of the

president of the General Conference, a small group considered the issue and returned with the recommendation which the Annual Council later accepted. One member of the full subcommittee, Mrs. Laurel Damsteegt, perceiving the dangers inherent in the motion, rose to her feet and asked the chairman to provide time for further discussion. The chairman refused, and the improper recommendation was hurried through without detailed consideration by those chosen for that purpose.

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of the discussions on women's ordination has been the curious rarity with which the question, "Is there any word from the Lord?" has been posed. One of the members of the Subcommittee on Women's Ordination which met at Cohutta Springs, Georgia, in July 1989 stated that she

expected a less pragmatic, more spiritual approach. Aside from morning devotions and ensuing prayers, the group did not spend time praying. Neither did we spend time searching the Scriptures. Laurel Damsteegt, *Adventists Affirm*, Fall 1989.

Had these procedures been followed, there is no doubt that a different decision, one mandated by God, would have resulted.

Sister Damsteegt described the decision-making process as follows:

These days of discussion allowed for the venting of individual feelings, but the group arrived at no conclusions because of this mass mumbo-jumbo, willy-nilly. After a couple of days of this frustration, we were suddenly confronted with having to make some kind of decision. We had no group consensus, because we had not even attempted to come to the bottom of the Scrip-

tural injunctions, or even to follow to their logical conclusions any of the arguments presented. Behind the scenes, someone had composed a statement that was pressed upon us as our only hope for accomplishing anything during this Commission. Ibid.

All too often such committees serve merely as rubber stamps for an administrative plan. The use of such a faulty decision-making process is perfectly designed to ensure that the members of the Committee have the least possible influence upon the final recommendation.

One very disturbing fact is that the vote of the committee favored the flawed compromise by 56 — 11. Mrs. Damsteegt's reaction was understandable:

First, I could not believe that all those delegates who I *knew* opposed ordination had voted for the compromise in hopes of thus settling the matter. Could they have really felt that this proposal was a final "No" to women's ordination? Through one swift vote, the bottom was deftly cut out of the whole issue. Ordination to the ministry was not to be determined on a theological / Scriptural basis but merely on the basis of gender. Ibid.

We wonder at the thinking of those who believed the ordination of women to be unscriptural, yet voted in favor of this proposal. Unquestionably, many of our people are weak. Further, they find themselves incapable of resisting the wishes of administration, no matter how much Scripture testifies against those wishes. In these last days, it is no time for God's people to use their votes *against* the plain testimony of God, irrespective of the position within God's church of those who make such a proposal.

As early as the spring of 1975, Colin was chairman of an *ad hoc* sub-committee of the General Conference to discuss

the issue of women's ordination. The committee members agreed to Colin's recommendation that search be made of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy writings to ascertain God's inspired counsel. The sub-committee's research revealed not the slightest support for the ordination of women, either as elders or ministers. When this report was rendered to the full *ad hoc* committee, the chairman, a General Conference vice president, disregarded the findings and stated that they must move toward the ordination of women. His statement was vigorously supported by the director of the General Conference Ministerial Association.

Though the sub-committee of which Colin was chairman was unanimous in recommending the report it rendered, only Colin and one other member of the sub-committee held firm when leadership pressure was exerted. This was a tragic reflection upon the lack of stable Biblical convictions of most Seventh-day Adventists. Not one word of Inspiration was submitted by the two leaders concerned to buttress their stand. The ordination of women by the Seventh-day Adventist Church is now simply a matter of time. Already women elders have been ordained in a number of countries. But even in North America only 17 percent of churches have ordained women elders, indicating that even in that Division, the laity is generally opposed.

A previous Annual Council action had led the way in this matter when non-ordained pastors were given the right to baptize and to perform marriage ceremonies. This action was not taken on the basis of the approval of inspiration but, as we have seen, in order to meet a United States taxation law. This dangerous move in the 1970s was much used to exert pressure in favor of the same roles for unordained women pastors.

Some contend that the North American Division is entitled to make its own decision on women's ordination, irrespective of the wishes of other Divisions. But such action would set a dangerous precedent. Ministers are presently ordained for the world field. It would not be long before some women "ministers" would commence a campaign against those Divisions which in conscience could not accept women's ordination. It would be argued that women's ordination was still not equal with men's since they could not serve as pastors in certain overseas Divisions. It would seriously fragment our church if we commenced ordaining ministers for service confined to limited areas of the world field.

The great test of the world field view of women's ordination came when the matter was discussed at the 1990 Indianapolis General Conference, a final vote being taken on Wednesday, July 11. That vote of 1174 against, 377 in favor, was decisive. Yet the following day, the overseas delegations capitulated to the false claims of many American delegates. These delegates claimed that for the sake of church unity, they had concurred with the desire of the overseas delegates who overwhelmingly opposed women's ordination. In view of this claim, Americans urged that the world fields now had the opportunity to play their role in church unity by supporting the American desire that women be permitted to perform the major functions of ordained ministers.

Of all the delegations, only the South American Division failed to listen to such false reasoning. The fact that 377 delegates, mainly Americans, voted in favor of women's ordination, was evidence of the fallacy of the North American claim that they bowed their desires in order to preserve

unity in the church. What sort of reasoning, in any case, is this within God's church? Would we, if the Roman Catholics agreed to accept Sabbath sacredness, yield our belief in the state of the dead in order to preserve unity? The acceptance of error can never be predicated upon any condition, much less to preserve unity.

Other American delegates convinced the majority (over 700 in favor, 494 against) that the General Conference in full session should accept the right of women to perform every ministerial function (except leading out in ordination services, and the formation of churches) despite the lack of biblical precedents. This argument was based upon the assertion that young people would leave the church in droves and potential converts would be lost. One delegate even claimed that in our failure to ordain women, our church standards were lower than those of the world. On such reasoning the decision of July 11 was virtually overthrown the following day. Surely the subordinate vote was inconsistent with the vote of the previous day.

The most alarming feature of these two incompatible votes was the fact that top leadership urged the vote against ordination, and then some of the same leaders urged the vote in favor of the wide functions of the women "pastors." This raises the fear that many delegates were willing to follow these leaders regardless of the lack of biblical basis for their pleas. We can only marvel that delegates were so unperceptive. Many appeared to be oblivious of the fact that they were casting a vote which was a major step toward the ordaining of women pastors, a matter they had resolutely rejected the previous day. It is with deep concern that we note that ordination of women elders did not begin as a result of deep Bible study by the world church in session; it was the

result of the pressure of the women's rights movement within the church. Yet God says,

Those who feel called out to join the movement in favor of woman's rights . . . might as well sever all connection with the third angel's message. *Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 1, 457.

Emotions were high. After Pastor Rick Blythe, an American missionary to the Marshall Islands in the Pacific Ocean, spoke against women's ordination, one American pastor awaiting his turn to speak told Pastor Blythe that his speech had insured that he would never get a pastorate back in the United States. Such statements indicate just how vicious are some liberals in the church. It is well that Pastor Blythe's ministry is in the hands of God, not in those of unfaithful pastors.

Indeed it was in the queue of those awaiting the opportunity to speak that some of the most revealing issues were discussed. As Russell awaited his opportunity to speak, the senior pastor of a large American church verbally attacked him, saying, "I trust you know the biblical reasons why he's wrong!" The pastor was referring to the speech of a Yugoslav delegate who had opposed women's ordination. Russell assured the pastor that he did not. Upon hearing Russell's opposition to women's ordination, the pastor consigned him to eternal loss in the judgment. Then in great vehemence the American pastor exploded, "You're the sort of person who would force blacks to sit in the back of the bus!" Russell was staggered. For someone who totally despises racial discrimination, this judgment was indeed incredible. Later Russell was told, "I can't bear to see a white man supporting such an injustice [as opposing women's ordination]." It was indeed a most revealing conversation. So intense was the pastor's

attack, that it became humorous and Russell started to laugh saying, "I thought it was only Australians who spoke so frankly." This broke the tension and the two parted on speaking terms.

However, the next day the same pastor verbally abused Dr. George Reid of the General Conference Biblical Research Institute as he stood in the queue. Dr. Reid replied, "You're very aggressive!" Dr. Reid's fate in the judgment was also seriously questioned by the pastor.

When Russell did eventually speak, he protested the procedural maneuvers adopted by a series of delegates, chiefly from North America. It seemed that some Americans believed that delegates who had travelled thousands of miles and who had an opportunity to speak only once every five years on the great issues impinging upon our church, nevertheless should be denied that right. Had it not been for the superb chairmanship of Dr. Calvin Rock, many delegates would have left very disillusioned with the system.

When walking back, Russell was addressed by yet another in the waiting line, a senior pastor of a college, who objected to his protest, believing that his reference to the North American efforts to block discussion was unfair. He pointed out that on one occasion an Australian had been responsible. They parted on friendly terms.

The issue of women's ordination will return to haunt God's church. When God's people are prepared to make decisions on sociological rather than Biblical criteria, we have entered tiger territory. No truth is now secure.

It is time, for those of us in the Western world who are at the forefront of altering the doctrines and practices of our church, to cease these destructive actions. It is surely a matter of marked arrogance to bring division into the world church by rushing ahead of the convictions of God's people

in other parts of the world, and then to use our unwarranted actions as a basis to urge approval for the sake of church unity; a unity we have despised by our selfish actions. We must also cease raising the unholy expectations of our young people, and then using these expectations as an argument in favor of placing the church's stamp of approval upon error. It is time for the world church to protest these matters in a most emphatic manner.

The implications of accepting the ordination of women elders and moving toward the ordination of women pastors are ominous for God's church. Most supporters state that there is nothing in the Scriptures against such ordination. This basis is a very dangerous one for the alteration of a church practice. At the 1990 General Conference Session, one Andrews University theologian emphasized his view that the lack of a Scriptural text against the ordination of women gave God's church the liberty to promote such ordination, by offering U.S. \$1,000 to any delegate who could produce a text from Scripture opposing the ordination of women. Russell unsuccessfully claimed the reward by pointing out that the Scriptures state that an elder must be the *husband* of one wife. The theologian refused to accept the implications of this text. It is a most dangerous matter to accept the absence of contrary evidence as grounds for a religious practice. Such was the attitude of the Roman Catholic church.

Rome began by enjoining what God had not forbidden, and she ended by forbidding what He had explicitly enjoined. *Great Controversy*, 290.

We now fear that the Seventh-day Adventist church will introduce practices specifically condemned by Inspiration,

for Inspiration has warned us that this is the usual consequence of the adoption of practices on the basis that God has not specifically forbidden them.

We could safely offer one thousand dollars for the discovery of a text of Scripture condemning the smoking of tobacco. Would the absence of such a text be valid reason to commence cigarette smoking? That such arguments are offered by our theologians emphasizes the dangers inherent in giving credence to their unscriptural statements.

Let it not be forgotten that Scripture frequently unfolds truth by illustration. No text states that women may be called to the prophetic office. Yet that this is a valid call to selected women cannot be disputed, for we read of Deborah, the daughters of Philip, Huldah, and other God-ordained prophetesses in Scripture. Similarly God illustrates His plan for the ordained ministry by calling no women to that office. Such illustration incorporates a plain "Thus saith the Lord."

We wrote that a large group of those promoting the ordination of women pastors reject the testimonies of the one *woman* prophet God has given His church in this time. It is ironic that those who heed the words of the church's woman prophet are they who oppose the unscriptural move to introduce women's ordination.

Once the battle for the ordination of women pastors is won, the next battle will be to urge the ordination of homosexual and lesbian pastors. The reader may respond "Impossible!" We reply, "Inevitable!" This progression has been the sure track record of many Protestant churches in whose pathway we seem determined to follow. When, oh, when will the children of light learn their lesson? We cry in anguish for the folly of many in our church.

Chapter 8

Credentialed Sin

Undoubtedly the most telling blow against the value of the ministerial credential is its continued issuance to men who preach open apostasy, men who have been proved to be fiscally dishonest, and men who are known adulterers. It is recognized that

any uncertainty in the matter of what ministerial credentials stand for in one field casts a shadow on all credentials and is a matter of general denominational concern. *Manual for Ministers*, 1977 edition, 38.

Today there is a serious shadow over all ministerial credentials because so many are held by men guilty of terrible evils. The Davenport affair brought the matter of financial dishonesty among leading ministers to light. Our General Conference president promised in writing in our church paper to bring the names of the culprits before God's flock, but yielded to heavy pressure and the usual fears of the legal profession, and withdrew that undertaking. These men deliberately misused God's funds in order to swell their own personal bank balances. Yet many of them are still in possession of current ministerial credentials.

Fidelity problems are proliferating in our church. The reports of our denominational auditors who detect widespread enhancing of expense accounts is just one of the

evidences of this. Brethren, if we cannot be honest in such matters, we do not merit ministerial credentials. How a minister could sell his soul for a few paltry dollars we do not know.

Many excuse their infidelity on the grounds that if they were similarly employed outside the church they would earn much more. They might! They might not! But if such persons do envy higher salaries, if the pursuit of wealth is their major motivation, let them sever their connection with God's work and go where the money is.

Financial dishonesty by ordained ministers is not confined to North America: it is to be found throughout the world field. Some of our ministers appear to be oblivious of the eighth commandment,

Thou shalt not steal. Exodus 20:15.

Yet even when discovered, some retain ministerial credentials.

The preaching and teaching of non-scriptural doctrines is widespread in our colleges. We have cited Avondale College as one example. In 1989 we discussed this problem with one of the senior officers of the General Conference. He expressed the opinion that he could now recommend no denominationally operated college in North America as a safe place to send our young people. This situation is not new. Yet we continue to issue ministerial credentials to these teachers whose chief mission in life appears to be the destruction of the faith of their students.

Well over a decade ago our General Conference president in his resignation speech of October 16, 1978, declared that

Regrettably there are those in the church who belittle the inspiration of the total Bible, who scorn the

first eleven chapters of Genesis, who question the Spirit of Prophecy's short chronology of the age of the earth, and who subtly and not so subtly attack the Spirit of Prophecy. There are some who point to the Reformers and contemporary theologians as a source and the norm for Seventh-day Adventist doctrine. There are those who are allegedly tired of the hackneyed phrases of Adventism. There are those who wish to forget the standards of the Church we love. There are those who covet and would covet the favor of the Evangelicals; who would throw off the mantle of a peculiar people; and those who would go the way of the secular materialistic world. Pastor Robert Pierson cited in *Adventist Review*, October 26, 1978

In heartfelt anguish Pastor Pierson cried out,

Fellow leaders, beloved brethren and sisters--do not let it happen! I appeal to Andrews University, to the Seminary, to Loma Linda University--don't let it happen! Ibid.

Pastor Pierson's voice has now passed away, but the anguish of heart of this true leader lives on.

Pastor Kenneth Wood, editor of the *Adventist Review* turned his attention to many appalling situations in our North American colleges. The outlook has not improved in the subsequent years.

We confess that we are alarmed by the fact that some of our colleges seem to be drifting away from the standards and objectives established for them by their founders. We are alarmed by the secular climate that prevails on some campuses. We are alarmed by the strange winds of doctrine that blow on some campuses. We are alarmed by the lax moral standards that

prevail on some campuses. "Colleges in Trouble," *Adventist Review*, February 21, 1980

Despite this shocking state of affairs in our colleges, we continue to grant ministerial credentials to many of the professors who are creating this crisis of faith and practice.

Undoubtedly ministerial credentials have been seriously inflated in the hands of men unfaithful to God's truth. As ministers of the gospel, we register our open protest.

Pastor Pierson mentioned that there are some "who belittle the inspiration of the total Bible." On August 9, 1989, a part-time lecturer in the Theology Department of Avondale College, after pointing out a number of "discrepancies" in the records of Chronicles and Kings and what he saw as disparities between the various gospel accounts of Christ's resurrection, declared,

If you believe, on the other hand, that God gave the information and encouraged men to write it down and saw to it that the message was conveyed correctly but that there is a combination of divine and the human in the Scriptures and the divine is always perfect and right and infallible but that the human is always fallible, one does not have problems.—Presented Avondale Memorial Church, August 9, 1989

This statement was not a mere acknowledgment that holy men wrote in their unique literary styles, nor that human language is quite inadequate to express every nuance of divine revelation; these facts are agreed. The whole context of the statement was that there are plain errors in Scripture and these are due to human fallibility. Such a Bible would be totally valueless.

Pastor Pierson objected to the failure of some to teach the short chronology of the world. An Andrews University pro-

fessor, now president of one of our colleges and a credentialed minister, wrote in a 1974 *Spectrum* article (n. 1/2, 1974, 5-19) a defense of the prolongation of the period of time since Creation week, quite contrary to the words of divine inspiration.

It must be stated, then, that our present knowledge of human civilization in the ancient near East apparently goes back (at Jericho, for instance) to the seventh millennium B.C. This information was not available to earlier generations of Bible students and they assumed that the Genesis genealogies were unbroken chains. Ibid.

We attended a scientific session at the General Conference precouncil in New Orleans in 1985. At that discussion the men present from the Andrews University Geoscience Institute would not support Sister White's chronological statements on this matter.

In 1988 a group of three science lecturers at Avondale College not holding ministerial credentials, but at least two holding missionary credentials, defended the point of view of evolutionists against a Creation Science speaker in a letter to the editor of the South Pacific Division *Record*, June 25, 1988. These men were thoroughly exposed when Mr. Basil Barnard revealed that most of their arguments had been plagiarized from the *Australian Skeptics* magazine. These three men have not retracted the position they supported in that letter, yet they continue in denominational employment, lecturing to our students at Avondale.

One layman reported that

At a Sabbath afternoon meeting in 1988, an Avondale theology teacher stated that Moses did not believe what he had written in Genesis about creation;

but that he believed the Babylonian idea that the earth was flat and was held up on four pillars! A Science Department man, with comparable ignorance and unbelief, then spoke supporting him.—Letter written to church leaders at Wahroonga and elsewhere by Brother Raglan Marks, January 14, 1990.

It is little wonder that lay people cry out.

Would the Lord whose Creative act in six days as Moses recorded, advise young people to study at the feet of such skeptics? . . . This is the rankest blasphemy and unbelief. The College allowed it and the Division did nothing. One Division man even wrote to me and said that nothing could be done. One of these men is still teaching at Avondale. What sort of influence will he have? Do our leaders care? Ibid.

Since many of our College professors in Australia teach the same agnosticism as the government universities, it is not surprising that it was announced that

Avondale College near Morisset, a tertiary institution run by the Seventh-Day Adventist [*sic*] Church, is seeking to affiliate with Newcastle University. *Newcastle Morning Herald*, February 9, 1990.

The article asserted that

the union [of Australian College Academics] would press to standardize salaries and working conditions, including superannuation and employment tenure. Ibid.

If this affiliation is accepted no lecturer will be permitted to be dismissed for doctrinal aberrations. The church leaders attempted to allay the fears of the laity but did admit that

Avondale College has made preliminary approaches [to Newcastle University] regarding an arrangement

which would provide continuing academic accreditation.

Church members were encouraged

to have the utmost confidence in the administration of the college and its determination to maintain independence. North New South Wales *Conference News*, March, 1990

Unfortunately Avondale College had already lost its independence when it agreed to four non-Adventist representatives sitting upon its board. See *Keepers of the Faith* by the same authors, Hartland Publications, P O Box 1, Rapidan, Virginia 22733, U.S.A. for further details.

In January 1985, when Colin visited England in order to present the old Seventh-day Adventist message, a Newbold College professor took it upon himself to tear down the advertisement for Colin's meetings but felt no compulsion to take similar action against an adjoining notice advertising an ecumenical service in the local Roman Catholic Church. Perhaps this act said more than words can express. /

Fellow believers, we must protest the continued issuance of credentials to such faithless men, and to persons not approved by Scripture.

Chapter 9

Unwanted Minister

As never before in the history of God's church, sincere men and women, baptized members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, men and women who are pillars of the church, are questioning the value of membership in our church. This situation brings great anguish to us. We love our church. To Christ and His church we have dedicated our entire lives. Yet many church leaders simply use church membership as a weapon, and thus fuel the separationist mentality.

One strange phenomenon in our church is the trend to excuse any evil, no matter how gross, provided it is performed by a church leader. This trend is said to demonstrate loyalty to God's church. Why church members expect less of denominational presidents than they would of the most lowly occupier of the pews is a deepening mystery. Associated with this attitude is a trend to condemn those who identify misdemeanors among the leaders while totally excusing the one whose false action generated the complaint.

Sister White put the matter in its proper perspective. She wrote,

Cleanse the camp of this moral corruption [among ministers], if it takes the highest men in the highest

positions. God will not be trifled with – There is much we will never know; but that which is revealed makes the church responsible and guilty unless they show a determined effort to eradicate the evil. Cleanse the camp, for there is an accursed thing in it. *Testimonies to Ministers*, 427,428.

Scripture guides us as to how we must deal with those who are in open violation of God's commands. In her message, cited above, Sister White directs our attention to a passage of Scripture. In this passage, God declared to Joshua,

neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you. Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you. Joshua 7:12,13.

In January 1989, a leader of the South Pacific Division made a public statement that Colin's ministerial credentials had been revoked. This pastor then had this misinformation circulated throughout Australia and New Zealand. When Russell took it upon himself to send a letter to each Union and Conference president, correcting the error and supplying proof of Colin's current ministerial credentials, he received a particularly nasty letter from the president of one Conference, attacking him for circulating this information far and wide. The Conference president did not make similar charges against his Division leader whose action had generated Russell's letter. It appeared that the Conference president was perfectly comfortable with the distribution of false information far and wide, but rose up against a similar dispersal of the truth. Perhaps the difference in attitude could be

attributed to the fact that Russell possessed no influence over the Conference president's upward mobility.

A similar attitude has been adopted against Pastor Austin Cooke.¹ Pastor Cooke has fearlessly exposed the teaching of false doctrines at Avondale College. His complaints have been valid, yet no action was taken against the false teachers who are destroying the faith of our youth. Rather, ecclesiastical ire has been heaped upon the head of the one who exposed these dreadful abuses of positions of trust.

It has been seen that Pastor Cooke's honorary ministerial credentials were revoked on May 23, 1989. But church leadership did not cease its persecution of this good man there. Russell has personally reviewed a videotape prepared by Avondale College in their vain attempt to refute Pastor Cooke's allegations. Hosted by an Avondale College theology professor, a number of witnesses testified against Pastor Cooke. The level of the accusations may be typified by a comment from one retired professor, who took exception to Pastor Cooke's hearty laugh. The professor described Pastor Cooke's laugh as "maniacal," and compared it to the laugh of a firebug or a saboteur. After being treated to such a level of argument, one can but be deeply concerned for those who use such efforts to discredit the godly concerns of God's sentinels. The very man who made this totally intolerant statement concerning Pastor Cooke's laugh subsequently lauded what he saw as the spirit of tolerance of his friends. He wrote that

Intolerance has been a disruptive force in Seventh-day Adventism in recent years. It contrasts with the

¹ Pastor Austin Cooke, a most successful Seventh-day Adventist evangelist, has rendered almost 50 years of service to God and His church.

way in which colleagues and friends of mine have worked closely together in mutual affection and respect in spite of widely divergent views on this issue. *South Pacific Record* April 7, 1990.

The writer had just attempted to refute a letter written by Sister Christine Pellicciotta to the editor of the same church paper. Sister Pellicciotta had upheld the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy. In retort this quoted writer had asked,

Is she [Sister Pellicciotta] referring to the earlier Ellen White who was partial to herrings and oysters? Or the Australian Ellen White who had adopted a fairly strict vegetarianism? Ibid.

This letter, when viewed in light of the author's comments upon Pastor Cooke, verifies our observation that those of liberal persuasion in our church demonstrate a great tolerance of those who propose various forms of error, but they possess a remarkably low level of tolerance of men such as Pastor Cooke, who proclaim truth.

Since the pastor of the Avondale Memorial Church, where Pastor and Mrs. Cooke held their memberships, was also a part-time lecturer in the Avondale College Theology Department, it was predictable that Pastor Cooke's church membership would be devalued.

The first recollections which we have of Sabbath school were in the little church at Boolaroo near the shores of Lake Macquarie. We were then the total membership of the children's Sabbath school. Our teacher, dear Sister Nita Paynter, who died at an age well into her eighties in October 1989, prepared for that Sabbath school class as if it contained 100 pupils. Russell visited her with our father ten months prior to her death and was able to thank her once

more for her love and devotion to two little lads. What an influence godly Sabbath school teachers have!

At the end of the 1930s Boolaroo Church had so dwindled in membership that our father, still in his twenties, became the only man in the church who could assume the role of elder. Beside our family, the church consisted of a few elderly ladies and a young man who was ordained as the church deacon. Happily in those days, the unscriptural concept of ordaining women elders did not enter the minds of our believers. They had not been brainwashed by the largely lesbian-inspired women's liberation movement. Even when we shifted house in December 1942, our father travelled every Sabbath for a number of years to that church in order to keep it operational.

A few years later, under the inspiration of Dr. Douglas Easthope, a dentist, the little Boolaroo Church revived. This church today, still small in membership, is a haven of dedicated Seventh-day Adventists. It was to this church that Pastor and Mrs. Cooke retreated when they recognized that they were no longer welcome in the Avondale Memorial Church.

Shortly the Cookes requested transfer of their memberships to the Boolaroo Church. This request was stimulated by an invitation to join their church from Boolaroo Church members who valued the Cookes' ministries. In a callous act the Avondale Memorial Church leadership refused to recommend to the church body the issuance of a letter of transfer in good and regular standing. We had reached the perilous situation in Australia where those teaching devilish error to our youth may hold ministerial credentials, while others, true to the faith, are no longer welcome as members of the church. It is little wonder that so many church mem-

bers in Australia and New Zealand now do not value their church membership. Church leaders in the South Pacific Division have so devalued the right of church membership as to make it almost totally worthless. For men like ourselves who value our church memberships highly, this state of affairs is tragic.

The Avondale Memorial Church pastor, no doubt with the blessing of Conference leadership, went further. He encouraged the board of the church to call a business meeting in order to discipline Pastor and Mrs. Cooke. This meeting was scheduled for November 19, 1989.

Seventh-day Adventists have expressed justifiable concern over the level of justice evidenced in the trial and unwarranted conviction of Lindy Chamberlain. But the level of justice meted out by our own church upon unfavored members often sinks well below that of the least responsible of our secular courts. Yet members who strongly protested the ill-treatment of Lindy Chamberlain, frequently remain silent when their brethren and sisters receive worse "justice" at the hands of misguided church leaders. Perhaps they fear the clerical ostracism such a protest would engender.

The Avondale Memorial Church pastor took it upon himself, in a letter addressed to the entire membership of the Avondale Memorial Church, to imply Pastor Cooke's guilt prior to the church trial. Many expressed the view that he wished to bias the minds of the membership in order to insure that his wishes and the wishes of the Conference leadership were fulfilled.

We are horrified by the injustice which the Roman Catholic Church meted out to Martin Luther. Yet some pastors and laypeople support no better in our own church. Speaking of this injustice Sister White commented:

Here is displayed the true spirit of popery. Not a trace of Christian principle, or even of common justice, is to be seen in the whole document [the Pope's instruction to his Legate]. Luther was at a great distance from Rome; he had no opportunity to explain or defend his position; yet before his case had been investigated, he was summarily pronounced a heretic, and in the same day, exhorted, accused, judged, and condemned. *The Great Controversy*, 134.

That the church members may act more responsibly than their church leaders was no idle hope. In December 1986, the Wallsend Church, near Newcastle, was asked to place Brother Bill Turner under church censure for allegedly distributing advertisements in the church inviting members to attend the Hartland Bible Conference held at that time. The charge was totally false--Brother Turner had been too busy inviting the members of the nearby Charlestown Church to the Bible Conference and had left it to a lady who eagerly volunteered to inform the Wallsend members. This fact was proved when Mrs. Gloria Nipperess stated that she had distributed the leaflets to the members of Wallsend Church.

This admission was a source of great embarrassment, for it effectively destroyed the case against Brother Turner. Immediately a new charge was laid. Brother Turner was charged, this time correctly, with being the one who had authorized the printing of the invitations. Thus the church leaders in the presence of the president of the North New South Wales Conference, amended the charge to fit the facts. Despite a strong plea for church discipline to be invoked against Brother Turner, the church emphatically rejected the wishes of the Conference president. Brother Turner's unexpected support from his fellow church members had been achieved by worldwide prayers in his behalf.

It will be noted that when Brother Turner was found to be not guilty of the initial charge that had been laid against him, leadership was still determined to get its way. Thus a new charge was pressed. Brother Turner had received absolutely no warning that he would be tried on the new charge. Thus justice was cast to the wind. If the initial charge was so serious, one may enquire why Sister Nipperess was not charged on the basis of her admission of guilt? Manifestly, this was an effort to discipline Brother Turner, irrespective of the facts of the case. Such blatant injustice casts a shadow upon God's church. Fortunately, our laypeople by a two-to-one majority dismissed this attempt of leadership to do harm to a fine Seventh-day Adventist layman.

Unchastened by this setback, the president of the North New South Wales Conference invited the Avondale Memorial Church to take similar action against Brother Hilton Meyers for publishing the *Anchor* magazine which chronicled unwarranted ecclesiastical actions against God's saints. Once again the church members, by a majority vote, rejected the request of their Conference president.

No doubt the pastor of Avondale Memorial Church had these setbacks in his mind as he sent his pastoral letter. In it he stated that

The church board is concerned about:

1. Pastor Cooke's attacks on the integrity of his fellow ministers.
2. Pastor Cooke's denigration of leadership at administration level.
3. Pastor Cooke's bitter and repeated attacks on Avondale College.
4. Pastor Cooke's statements regarding the practices and beliefs of individuals in leadership roles.

5. Pastor Cooke's statement regarding Sanitarium Health Food Company products.—Letter written by the pastor of Avondale Memorial Church to the members of the Avondale Memorial Church dated October 19, 1989

It will be noted the pastor cited these five charges as if they were proven facts. The charges were not modified by the word *alleged*. Such is a shameful method of conducting a church trial and displays no credit to the church. Furthermore, the Trans-Tasman Union ministerial secretary, who had already judged Pastor Cooke, since he sat on the Union Committee which revoked Pastor Cooke's ministerial credentials, had been appointed to chair the church business meeting.

Lest all these factors be insufficient to insure that predetermined result desired by both church and Conference leadership, totally unfair ground rules for the meeting were laid down. The witnesses Pastor Cooke intended to call had to be pre-named. This requirement would permit church leaders to make every effort to encourage the witnesses to withdraw their testimonies or modify them. He was not to be permitted a cross-examination of his accusers. No particulars of the charges were afforded him.

Brethren and sisters, surely it is time to rise up against these activities foreign to the hearts of true believers around the world. To continue this type of conduct within our church is to countenance conduct little different in type from that favored by the church of the Middle Ages.

Charge number five would evoke contemptuous mirth were it not such a serious reflection on the mind-set of some of our church leaders. Pastor Cooke in a private discussion in a home had stated that some products produced by the

Sanitarium Health Food Company were declared to be unhealthful by a certain secular publication.

Brethren and sisters, what is our church coming to? Shall we, as an act of faith, request every church member to sign a statement affirming that, contrary to the evidence of chemical analysis, every morsel produced by the Sanitarium Health Food Company is healthful? Would this be a valid means to determine the loyalty of Seventh-day Adventists? We protest even though Russell is a great supporter of Weet-Bix, So Good, Nut Meat, and Nutolene, as may be testified by the operator of our little store in the Southeast Asia Union Mission office. Colin, when in Australia, also highly values some products of the Sanitarium Health Food Company.

The fourth charge is equally trivial. In the same private conversation, Pastor Cooke simply remarked that a former Avondale College lecturer had reported that the president of the South Pacific Division had stated that he did not believe eleven of the twenty-seven fundamentals of our faith. Whether the former college lecturer had accurately reported the Division president, we do not know. We doubt it. But are we going to discipline a man for reporting, in private, a conversation he had with another person? Let us take the worst scenario — that Pastor Cooke misheard the alleged remark. Is such a mistake (even if it occurred) worthy of church discipline? Was this same leader placed under church discipline when he publicly (not privately) declared that Colin's ministerial credentials had been revoked in January 1989? He, too, was acting on information someone else provided. Would the pastor of Avondale Memorial Church have been equally anxious to discipline his Division president for this "misdemeanor" had he been a member of his church? We hardly suspect so. We stand in awe of the "courage" of

certain ministers in dealing with men whom they know to be out of favor with their superiors. Rarely do we detect similar courage when other men, favored by leadership, perform even the most serious misdemeanors.

The first three charges are emotive ones. They indicate the insecurity of leadership in the South Pacific Division. It is beyond dispute that Pastor Cooke had boldly denounced the teaching of error at Avondale College. He had not been afraid to urge his fellow pastors to stand by their duty to uphold the faith. To do less would have been rank cowardice. We have a crisis of the most serious nature in the South Pacific. Oh, for a thousand Pastor Cookes to cry aloud and spare not!

If God abhors one sin above another, of which his people are guilty, it is doing nothing in case of an emergency. Indifference and neutrality in a religious crisis is regarded of God as a grievous crime, and equal to the very worst type of hostility against God. *Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 3, 281.

Pastor Cooke has certainly not taken a neutral stand. Yet Pastor Cooke's urgent pleas have been couched in relatively mild terms. We have yet to hear him refer to the leaders of his church as "a generation of vipers," as "whited sepulchres," as "hypocrites," as "blind," or as "fools." See Matthew 23. We have never seen him stand in the foyer of any of God's churches and cry out against the sins of the supplicants as they entered to worship. See Jeremiah 7. Seventh-day Adventists have always admired the forthrightness of Duke George of Saxony when he, in defending Martin Luther, denounced the corrupt practices of the Roman Catholic Church in language that makes Pastor Cooke's protestations

appear to be most restrained by comparison. Duke George stated,

These are some of the abuses that cry out against Rome. All shame has been put aside, and their only object is . . . money, money, money, . . . so that the preachers who should teach the truth, utter nothing but falsehoods, and are not only tolerated, but rewarded, because the greater their lies, the greater their gain. It is from this foul spring that such tainted waters flow. Debauchery stretches out the hand to avarice . . . Alas, it is the scandal caused by the clergy that hurls so many poor souls into eternal condemnation. A general reform must be effected. D'Aubigné, *History of the Reformation* Book 7, Chapter 4, quoted in *The Great Controversy*, 149

Why do we admire the courage of Duke George yet condemn that of Pastor Cooke? Perhaps Pastor Cooke has been too restrained in his approach. Yet as we have spoken to him in person, we have detected a deep love for God's church and its brethren and sisters. After almost fifty years of faithful ministry, it would be difficult to feel otherwise.

But even if Pastor Cooke had viciously attacked his fellow ministers, as charged (but all evidence contradicts this charge), is that not precisely what his accusers have done? Only God can fully answer that question. But we must testify that we have heard bitter criticism of fellow ministers at all levels of God's church. It is shameful. But in truth virtually all of us share such guilt. We do not deny our own sin in this respect. Indeed some may even see this manuscript as evidence in confirmation; it is a matter of perspective. God alone knows the heart. However, we have asked our Lord to use this document as a small spark from which may arise a great reformation in our midst, for we love this church of

ours and we enjoy no more blessed fellowship than that with our humble church members, fellow pastors, and church leaders.

The sad truth is that if such criticism were grounds for church discipline, the church would be depleted of its ministry. What of those ministers, who have fiercely criticized Pastor Cooke and other faithful pastors such as O.K. Anderson and George Burnside?

Is it not likely that if Christ were among us, as He was in apostolic times, and we were to bring Pastor Cooke before Him for discipline, that Jesus may commence writing in the soil and we would slink away too ashamed to press our charges further?

We reiterate the point that the church is most certainly not just the leadership, no matter how much those of us in leadership roles would covet such an understanding. God's church is His humble flock. Yet how often has God's church, when viewed from this perspective, suffered from bitter and repeated attacks on its integrity, denigration of its efforts and misrepresentation of its practices and beliefs, at the hands of us who are ministers? Surely the time is here when we ministers should take stock of ourselves and humbly confess that all too frequently we have poorly served God's church.

Chapter 10

No Room in the Church

Pastor Cooke's saga did not end at that point. When Russell wrote the previous sentence on January 20, 1990, he laid down his pen for a brief respite. He had not the least idea that he would be framing these next sentences. He could not have anticipated the terrible words he was about to hear.

His phone rang. The caller was his brother-in-law, Dr. David Pennington. David said, "I have bad news for you, Russ. Mavis Cooke died this morning." Russell was stunned. Mavis was only 66 years of age and she had absolutely no history of cardiac disease or any other serious malady. She died with a broken heart, still without her church membership.

Only thirty-six hours prior to her death, the Cookes had been visited by the president of the Trans-Tasman Union, no doubt seeking to find a solution to the growing problems arising out of the Cookes' loss of church membership. But his visit had generated much stress and Mavis was reduced to tears. Her last pleading words to the Union president were, "There is no doubt that we want to be members of the church. . . . the manipulations have gone on to get us to this situation." Just before these words Pastor Cooke, unaware of

how soon Mavis would prove the truth of his assertion about her, had stated, "We are Seventh-day Adventists till we die." Mavis, an accomplished pianist and a woman of attractive appearance and vivacious personality, had stood nobly beside Austin in his years of evangelistic ministry. Her reward for her loyalty to God and her church was to die an outcast from the church she loved and served so well.

Brethren and sisters, each one of us who permits this type of situation to come about shares the blame. How many more godly souls must die with broken hearts while leaders uphold blatant apostasy south of the equator? How much more heartache does our ministry intend to engender before it returns to the faith it well knows has been seriously distorted?

The Trans-Tasman Union president has stated privately that when he was president of the South Queensland Conference he would not invite one of the prominent members of the Theology Faculty of Avondale College to preach in his conference because of his apostate views. Yet this man is still a senior member of the Theology Department at Avondale College. He was ordained to the gospel ministry despite his lack of faith in Adventist doctrine. It was not this unfaithful pastor that the Union president condemned, but faithful Austin Cooke. We have totally lost our way in Australia. Our leaders know there is shameful apostasy at Avondale, but it is politically inexpedient to do anything about it. It is far easier, apparently, to discipline the faithful than the erring. To this we say, "Halt!"

In the early 1980s, the secretary of the South Pacific Division wrote to Russell informing him that the college was then turning out fewer faithless graduates than it had five years earlier. But five years earlier we had been assured that

decade to learn how bad things are there today? Incredibly when two Trans-Tasman Union leaders were speaking to the Cookes in September 1989, it was asserted that things were improving at Avondale College and the faith of the theological graduates was more satisfactory than previously. It appears that leaders are constrained to admit that the lecturers at Avondale College have produced faulted graduates a few years earlier, but always claim that contemporary graduates are now being taught God's truth. Yet we continue to employ largely the same professors who perverted the faith of our youth five years ago. Not one of the professors has ever humbly confessed his guilt and made earnest effort to correct the fearful wrongs he has perpetrated against the lambs of God's flock. It requires no prophetic gift to predict that in 1995 the leadership in Australia will admit that all was not well at Avondale College in 1990. In reality it is in an appalling state of apostasy.

Mavis Cooke was buried in the Avondale Cemetery on January 24, 1990, in the presence of the men who had been responsible for the loss of her church membership. The burial service, said to be the best many had heard, was conducted by three faithful ministers, Pastors O.K.Anderson, Ken Wright, and Wal Hammond.

With deep sorrow we return to the story Russell had originally planned to outline following the first sentence of this chapter.

Pastor O.K.Anderson also became disillusioned with the Avondale Memorial Church and requested transfer of his membership to Boolaroo. His request was granted, although the Boolaroo Church pastor was less than enthusiastic. Pastor Anderson counseled the brethren of that church to accept the Cookes into the membership of Boolaroo Church upon

profession of faith in view of the perversity of the Avondale Memorial Church in refusing them a letter of transfer. The church business meeting met on October 23, 1989, and voted the church elder, Dr. Doug Easthope, into the chair, since the church pastor was not favorable to the proposed action. The church members warmly welcomed the Cookes into church fellowship, passing the first and second readings at the one meeting. In this the Boolaroo church acted perfectly within its rights. Once again the lay people of the church had demonstrated more spiritual discernment than their pastor.

But this was not the view of the president of the North New South Wales Conference. Upon learning of the church's action, he rang Dr. Easthope and berated him for a considerable period, threatening to cast the Boolaroo Church out of the sisterhood of churches. Such is the feeling of church leaders in Australia against faithful pastors and their wives. Such are the tactics employed. The Conference president well knew he did not have the authority to remove Boolaroo Church from the sisterhood of churches. (That authority rests with the constituency of the conference alone.) But he appeared to feel that he could count on the constituency fulfilling his wishes in the matter. Alternatively, some felt that the president's threats were a big bluff. Dr. Easthope did not concede. Neither did the church board when called at the behest of the Conference president.

During the board meeting, held on November 6, 1989, a terrible spirit prevailed. Mavis Cooke was present at the request of a number of church board members. When a previous request had been made by the Cookes to attend a church board meeting, the Boolaroo Church pastor had refused on the grounds that the president was not present and only one side would be represented. But now the church

pastor offered no objection when the Conference president verbally ejected Sister Cooke from the meeting. Apparently, there was no problem at all in the church board hearing a one-sided account, so long as it was the Conference's side.

The atmosphere in the church board meeting has been described by one who attended it as follows:

The satanic presence in that room and the threatening attitude of [the Conference president] frightened me so much that I was reduced to tears. Constantly, I said to [the church pastor] "Stop him, he's evil," referring to [the Conference president]. I have never sensed such an evil force in the world, let alone coming from within the church, in all my life. — Letter written to the president of the South Pacific Division by Sister Kerry Harrison, Church Clerk, Boolaroo Church, January 24, 1990

It is only fair to present the Conference president's assessment of that meeting. His view was entirely different from that of Sister Harrison's. One could scarcely believe that each was referring to the same meeting. But they were.

To begin with there were no threats made to the Boolaroo Church. The meetings, both with the board and the business meeting were very cordial meetings in a very relaxed atmosphere, and at which no pressure was exerted on the church. — Letter addressed to Dr. Russell Standish by the president of the North New South Wales Conference dated January 23, 1990

In view of the president's account, was Sister Harrison over-reacting? Was she misreporting? Fortunately, a tape record of that board meeting is extant. Russell has heard it. The atmosphere may be judged by the following statements uttered in the first five minutes of the board meeting:

Conference president: "Sister Cooke, you are not a member of the church!" [She was.]

Conference president: "I have a message for you very clearly. Too much nonsense, we'll adjourn this meeting, but it will go to the conference session and I will let the session deal with you. And if the session deals with you, you will have a problem!"

Sister Cooke: "Who will have a problem?" [Just prior to her ejection from the meeting.]

Conference President: "Boolaroo Church."

Sister Joan Cuskelly: "I am prepared to stand up for the Cookes."

Conference president: "You can stand on your head if you want to!"

Conference president: "The issue is an action of this board which went to a business meeting of this church which was totally out of order."

Perhaps Dr. Easthope said more, later in the meeting, than he then realized when he questioned, "How long are you going to hound these people--to their graves?" Let the reader judge whether Sister Harrison or the Conference president more accurately represented the spirit of that board meeting.

While Pastor O.K.Anderson was fulfilling a speaking appointment at our father's church in Euroā in Victoria, a hastily called business meeting of the Boolaroo Church convened on November 13, 1989. At that meeting, the president of the North New South Wales Conference did threaten the humble members of the church with the possibility of having the church cast out of the sisterhood of churches, implied that the Cookes were guilty of grievous sins, and thus coerced the

members into rescinding their church business meeting action. (Six courageous church members voted against the motion to rescind.)

In the meantime, believing their memberships to be secure at Boolaroo, the Cookes resigned their membership from the Avondale Memorial Church in a letter addressed to the church clerk, Avondale Memorial Church. (Letter signed by Austin P. Cooke and Mavis T. Cooke dated and hand delivered on October 23, 1989.) Fully aware that the Cookes now had lost membership in Boolaroo Church due to the timid action of most of the church members there, the pastor of Avondale Memorial Church called a church business meeting of the Avondale Memorial Church. He explained that the Cookes had sent in letters of resignation and suggested that, if these resignations were accepted, the church and the Cookes would be spared a church trial. The members naively accepted the resignations. Thus by a series of tactics which highlighted the bankruptcy of our Australian Church, the Cookes were excluded from church membership. We repeat; it is little wonder that many Australian Seventh-day Adventists see their own memberships devalued by such actions.

Feigning a lack of knowledge of the full circumstances surrounding the Cookes' loss of church membership, the president of the Trans-Tasman Union wrote,

I understand very recently you and your wife have resigned your membership in the Seventh-day Adventist church. — Letter written by the president of the Trans-Tasman Union Conference to Pastor A. P. Cooke dated December 1, 1989

In the letter, the Union president admitted that Pastor Cooke is

a committed Seventh-day Adventist who holds to the beliefs of this church. Ibid.

Yet he darkly implied that Pastor Cooke risked having his ordination annulled.

It would be incongruous, [he wrote], to have a person who does not hold membership in the church, or who has not followed the procedures that the church has laid down in the *Church Manual* for transfer or anything else of membership, to be considered as an ordained person. Ibid.¹

It will be noticed that Pastor Cooke had been painted into a corner. His membership had been removed by artifice, and as a result *he* was accused of being the one who had left the church and who had contravened the *Church Manual*. We can only weep that such shameful conduct may be found at the higher levels of our church. Our church needs our prayers as never before. Speaking of God's flock, Sister White states,

more especially will their prayers arise in behalf of the church, because its members are doing after the manner of the world. *Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 5, 209, 210.

Our leaders need our prayers. We need to pray for one another, for surely we have reached the time spoken of by the servant of the Lord when she saw that it would appear that the church was about to fall. Were it not for the assurance of Inspiration that God's church will not fall, we could be forgiven for believing that it was about to join the fallen

¹ Predictably the Union president did not take such a harsh view of the failure of the Avondale Memorial Church to abide by the conditions set out in the *Church Manual*. It was a case of the selective use of the *Church Manual*.

churches of Protestantism. We thank God for His promise not to cast us aside, for we surely deserve such a fate.

In truth we are

...wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. Revelation 3:17.

The time has come that in contrition of heart we pray,

We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, to all the people of the land. . . . O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. Yea all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. . . . O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name. Daniel 9:5,6, 8-11,18,19

The charge that Pastor Cooke was not following church policy in seeking membership in Boolaroo Church was patently false. All churches have the authority to accept any

baptized person true to the principles of our faith into its membership upon profession of faith.² The charge of disregarding church policy could not have been more misplaced. It was the church leaders, not Pastor Cooke, who breached policy. The Avondale Memorial Church pastor, annoyed that the Cookes were now outside his jurisdiction, took the almost unprecedented step of remonstrating with the Boolaroo Church clerk over the legitimate action of the church body.

The pastor wrote concerning the action of the Boolaroo Church business meeting which accepted the Cookes into church membership,

The Avondale Memorial Church board views this as a serious breach of church protocol, particularly as the Boolaroo Church board has been strongly advised against taking such action. The Boolaroo Church is seen by the Avondale Memorial Church board to be a party to "persistent refusal to recognize properly constituted church authority, or to submit to order and discipline of the church" (Church Manual, p. 162). Therefore, we request Boolaroo Church to rectify this matter immediately and the Avondale Memorial Church board has taken action to lodge an official protest with the Conference Executive Committee regarding the decision of the Boolaroo Church. In the meantime, the Avondale Memorial Church board does not recognize the action of the Boolaroo church in accepting the Cookes into membership. As far as this church is concerned, Pastor and Mrs. Cooke remain members of this church until proper procedure is followed.—Letter written by the church pastor Avondale Memorial church and the Recording Clerk, Avondale Memorial church, dated October 29, 1989.

² See next chapter.

Even the Conference president was constrained to write,

It was felt by the board of Boolaroo Church that your letter was high-handed and savored of arrogance. That because the Memorial Church was big it could push smaller churches around. — Letter written to the pastor of Avondale Memorial Church by the President North South Wales Conference dated Nov. 10, 1989.

What was worse were the hierarchical sentiments of the letter. "Properly constituted church authority" IS the church business meeting. We have no higher human authority.

In one of her last letters Sister Cooke pointed out the impropriety of the Avondale Memorial Church board action. (Recorded in letter written by Mavis Cooke to the pastor of the Avondale Memorial Church dated November 7, 1989.) The Conference president also overstepped policy in demanding that the Boolaroo Church rescind its proper action and implying that he could control the Conference constituency to vote his desires in the matter of the exclusion of the Boolaroo congregation from the church body. In reality it is highly unlikely that the constituency would have acceded to the Conference president's wrongful wishes. Already Wallsend and Avondale Memorial churches had shown that they were unprepared to accept false advice when offered by him.

Even the death of Mavis Cooke did not soften the hearts of church leadership. Pastor Bruce Price, pastor of the Waitara Church in Sydney, invited Pastor Cooke to preach in his church. This invitation reached the ears of the pastor of Avondale Memorial Church who contacted the president of the Greater Sydney Conference, and pressed him to use his position to influence Pastor Price to rescind the invitation. (Letter written to Dr. R. Standish by the president of North New South Wales Conference, March 7, 1990.) Pastor Price,

one of a small group of faithful ministers in the Greater Sydney Conference, was forced to yield to the pressure. If he had not, would Waitara Church have been severed from the sisterhood of churches? Absurd as such a suggestion is, we have reached the level of church administration in Australia where nothing may be regarded as impossible.

The elders of the Windsor Church in December 1989 had discussed offering membership to Pastor and Mrs Cooke. One elder alerted the president of the North New South Wales Conference who, unwearied in his efforts to block all attempts to afford church membership to a 73-year-old pastor and his wife who were without fault, pressed the president of the Greater Sydney Conference to fulfill his will in exerting ecclesiastical pressure upon the leadership of the Windsor Church.

Brother Max Johnson, leading elder of Windsor Church, commenting upon the pressure he received and the reasons he would not yield to it concluded,

I find the whole episode saddening. To think that we welcome all sorts of "sinners" as visitors to our church, but invite someone who has apparently fallen from "grace" in the eyes of some leaders, [and this] warrants interference and pastoral pressure to prevent former members and a [former] pastor [of Windsor Church] from being able to fellowship with folk of like faith! Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that some are intimidated by those who speak the truth with clarity and call sin by its right name. — Letter written to Dr. R. Standish by Brother Max Johnson, leading elder, Windsor Church, Greater Sydney conference dated May 20, 1990. See Appendix D.

Cessnock Church investigated offering membership to Pastor Cooke after Mrs. Cooke's death. The Conference president with the pastors of the Avondale Memorial and Boolaroo Churches attended a meeting at which Pastor Cooke was present. Perhaps the suggestion of one of the leaders of the Cessnock Church did cause conference concern. He suggested that if the Cessnock Church was cut off from the sisterhood of churches, the members would meet on the front lawn of the church and invite television crews from Newcastle to film their services for news broadcasts. However one views such a suggestion, it does underline the festering confrontation between laity and leadership for which the responsibility, in this case, obviously rests upon church leadership in the South Pacific Division.

The first elder of Cessnock Church commented that

It was a sad day for the Cessnock SDA Church when our Conference president . . . informed the membership of the church board that it could not take you into its church membership on profession of faith because you had to first present yourself to the board of the Avondale Church to answer to their inquisition. . . . Then to be told that [the president of the North New South Wales Conference] would have to take the Cessnock Church to a special session of the sisterhood of churches to be dealt with as a church in rebellion was, to say the least, not what one would expect to hear from a Conference president. — Letter written by Brother George Hill, First Elder, Cessnock Church to Pastor Austin Cooke, June 13, 1990.

It is clear that the North New South Wales Conference president believed that the threat of expulsion from the sisterhood of churches which had intimidated the Boolaroo Church

membership was likely to achieve a similar dire effect upon the Cessnock Church membership. See Appendix E.

This unwarranted conference interference in the affairs of four churches defies the plainest words of inspiration:

Many claim that a position of trust in the church gives them authority to dictate what other men shall believe and what they shall do. This claim God does not sanction. *The Desire of Ages*, 414.

The spirit of domination is extending to the presidents of our Conferences. *Manuscript 15*, 1895.

A man's position does not make him one jot or one tittle greater in the sight of God; it is character alone that God values. *Ibid.*

The high-handed power that has been developed, as though position has made men gods, makes me afraid and ought to cause fear. *Ibid.*

The church organization is to be respected, but it is not to be made in any way a galling yoke. Men are not to assume the prerogative of God, and think to rule and oppress. *Manuscript 43*, 1895.

Evil does not result because of organization, but because of making organization everything, and vital godliness of little moment. *Christian Education*, 134.

Chapter 11

Improper Church Authority

As a result of the rescinding of the action of the Boolaroo Church business meeting, which had given the Cookes membership in that church, at least three board members, Sister Kerry Harrison, Sister Joan Cuskelly and Brother Terry Branster (an elder), resigned all offices in the church. Brother Branster was so shocked and fearful of the actions of the North New South Wales Conference that he immediately took steps to have his membership transferred to Windsor Church, the church of his boyhood, in the Greater Sydney Conference. In this way, he hoped to avoid the type of ecclesiastical action he had witnessed.

Prior to this episode, Boolaroo Church had been a happy, united church. Now it is seriously divided. Predictably, the disunity of the church will not be blamed upon the wrongful actions of the church leadership, but upon the few who bravely withstood usurped ecclesiastical authority. If history is repeated, it can be expected that every effort will be made to bring the reputations of these good lay people into disrepute in order to absolve conference administration from responsibility for the church split.

The *Church Manual* was used as a battering ram against the members of the Boolaroo Church. Frequently quoted was the following statement:

In case a person applies for membership upon profession of faith, and it is found that he is still a member of some other church in the denomination, no steps should be taken to receive him until the church holding his membership grants him a letter of transfer. If the church refuses to grant such a letter, and the member feels he is unjustly denied a letter, he can appeal to the conference committee where his membership is held. The church where his membership is held or the conference committee are the proper ones to decide whether his past conduct has been such that he is entitled to a church letter. *Church Manual*, 50.

We do not believe that any Conference has a right to overrule the highest human authority of our church--the local church business meeting. The only proper role of the conference is to offer counsel.

No provision is here made for assistance to individuals, such as the Cookes, who are faced with injustice from both the local church and the Conference.

But surely the time has come when the place of the *Church Manual* must be re-evaluated. It is simply a guide to church order. It is not the law of the Medes and Persians. When the provision of a *Church Manual* was first mooted in the nineteenth century, the General Conference rejected it. The committee saw quite plainly that it would come to be used punitively against church members. A sub-committee was set up to examine the proposal. The committee's words are worthy of record.

It is the unanimous opinion of the committee appointed to consider the matter of a *Church Manual*,

that it would not be advisable to have a *Church Manual*. We consider it unnecessary because we already have surmounted the greatest difficulties connected with church organization without one; and perfect harmony exists amongst us on this subject. It would seem to many like a step towards the formation of a creed or a discipline, other than the Bible, something we have always been opposed to as a denomination. If we had one, we fear many, especially those commencing to preach, would study it to obtain guidance in religious matters, rather than to seek it in the Bible, and from the leading of the Spirit of God which would tend to their hindrance in genuine religious experience and in knowledge of the mind of the Spirit. It was in taking similar steps that other bodies of Christians first began to lose their simplicity and became formal and spiritually lifeless. Why should we imitate them? The committee feel, in the short, that our tendency should be in the direction of the policy and close conformity of the Bible rather than to elaborate defining every point in the church management and church ordinances. *Review and Herald*, November 20, 1883.

The president of the General Conference, Pastor George Butler, made this personal comment:

When brethren who have favored a manual have even contended that such a work was not to be anything like a creed or discipline, or to have any authority to settle disputed points, but was only to be considered as a book containing hints for the help of those of little experience, yet it must be evident that such a work, issued under the auspices of the General Conference, would at once, carry with it much weight of authority, and would be consulted by most of our young ministers. It would gradually shape and mould the whole body; and those who did not follow it would

be considered out of harmony with established principles of church order.¹ And really, is this not the object of a manual? What would be the use of one if not to accomplish such a result? But would this result, on a whole, be a benefit? Would our ministers be broader, more original, more self-reliant men? Would they be better depended upon in great emergencies? Would their spiritual experience likely be deeper and their judgment more reliable? We think the tendency all the other way--We have preserved simplicity, and have prospered in so doing. It is best to let well enough alone. For these and other reasons, the *Church Manual* was rejected. *Review and Herald*, November 27, 1883.

Surely the North New South Wales Conference's conduct of the Cooke case, over one hundred years later, served to illustrate that Pastor Butler's fears were well-founded. In almost every specific Pastor Butler's reservations were realized. Oh! that Pastor Butler's final prediction had also proven true, for he had stated his belief that

¹ Note the precise fulfillment of this prediction in the text of the letter written by the leaders of the Avondale Memorial Church to the Boolaroo Church clerk dated October 29, 1989. After quoting from the *Church Manual*, the authors of the letter charged Boolaroo Church with committing "a serious breach of church protocol." They charged it with "persistent refusal to recognize properly constituted church authority, or to submit to the order and discipline of the church." Little did the authors of this letter recognize that they were fulfilling the very prediction Pastor Butler had made. The fear of the type of accusations levelled by the church board of Avondale Memorial Church was the very reason that the General Conference eschewed the formulation of a *Church Manual* in the nineteenth century. Time has proved the wisdom of their decision. It would be well to withdraw the *Church Manual* before the arrival of the twenty-first century.

It is probable that [the demand for the preparation of a manual] will never be brought forward again. Ibid.

How much happier and more successful would our churches have been without a manual!

It must again be emphasized that the local church body has full rights to accept men and women into their church membership or to reject such an application. The church members alone must decide.

Just as the churches in the United States who hold the memberships of two apostate ministers, Desmond Ford and Walter Rea, have steadfastly refused pressure from "above" to disfellowship these men (and this is their perfect right irrespective of how we may view the fidelity of these churches), so each church congregation has the sole right to decide whom it will take into its membership, *Church Manual* regulations not withstanding. These are man-made regulations; they change, and they may be faulty. As a guide they may have some value, although even this point is doubtful. But as a dictatorial set of laws they overstep their purpose. Each church congregation must decide for itself regulations for order in the conducting of its own affairs. If these correspond with those set forth in the *Church Manual*, well and good. If they do not, so be it.

In reality the *Church Manual* was used very selectively by the North New South Wales Conference and Avondale Memorial Church. The *Church Manual* (p. 45) lays down the regulation that requests for transfer must be dealt with within three months of their receipt. This regulation was breached by the Avondale Memorial Church. Of course this, too, was its right, but in view of the insistence of its church board that other sections of the *Church Manual* carry the full weight of church law, this breach does at the least demon-

strate a selective use of the *Church Manual*. Further, in this instance, common courtesy does demand a prompt attention and answer to such requests for church transfer.

Pastor and Mrs. Cooke requested a transfer of membership on November 5, 1988. Letter written to the church clerk, Boolaroo Church by Austin P. Cooke and Mavis T. Cooke, November 5, 1988. The Cookes received no reply to their request for over five months. When the response did arrive it stated, quoting the *Church Manual*, 50, as cited above, that

Under these circumstances we are unable to accept your membership as per that method. — Letter written to Pastor and Mrs. A. Cooke by Boolaroo Church pastor and the then church clerk of Boolaroo Church, April 13, 1989

So determined was the Boolaroo Church pastor to prevent the Cookes' entry into the Boolaroo Church that he removed from the files of the church clerk a letter written by Pastor Cooke to her with a request that it be presented to the church. This letter was never presented before the church, nor did the pastor return it. Sister Harrison, the new church clerk, only restored it to the file by requesting a photocopy from Pastor Cooke.

The action of the Avondale Memorial Church in accepting the Cookes' resignations was no doubt felt to be a master stroke, for on their own requests, they were now non-members of the church. Of course this was not the wish of Pastor and Mrs. Cooke and had been manipulated by quashing their church membership at Boolaroo.

The resignations of the Cookes had been received prior to the preceding business meeting of the Avondale Memorial

Church. But no action was taken in line with the church's declaration that

As far as this church is concerned, Pastor and Mrs Cooke remain members of this church. — Letter written by church pastor and church clerk, Avondale Memorial Church to Sister Kerry Harrison, church clerk, Boolaroo Church dated October 29, 1989.

However, once word of the rescinding of the Cookes' membership in Boolaroo Church had reached Avondale Memorial Church, it "forgot" its former declaration and hastily accepted their resignations. Such is church politics in Australia.

Nevertheless, Avondale Memorial Church was not as clever as some thought. In casting the Cookes out of their church, they had removed the one barrier cited in the *Church Manual* against the Cookes' acceptance, upon profession of faith, into any other willing church.

Yet, ignoring their eligibility for membership in those other churches, the president of the North New South Wales Conference, as we have seen, still used all his power in both the Cessnock and the Windsor Churches to prevent Pastor Cooke being accepted into membership. Further, when the Trans-Tasman Union president visited the Cookes on January 18, 1990, seeking to restore them into church membership, he did not calm their fears by reminding them that now, even by the standards of the *Church Manual*, they were eligible to re-present their request for acceptance into church membership by profession of faith to the Boolaroo Church. Rather, he urged them to answer the charges laid against them by the Avondale Memorial Church, the very church which had relinquished any right to discipline the Cookes by their action in accepting the Cookes' resignation. Surely this

suggestion was in total breach of the regulations in the *Church Manual*. This was a portion of the cause of Mavis Cooke's distress.

Such actions bring leadership credibility into question to the extent that some faithful ministers suggested that the purpose of the Union president's visit was to effect the membership of the Cookes because of the heavy criticism he was then enduring. Only the president can know if this allegation was so. We pray his motives were of a higher order. We believe they were.

What is certain is that the Cookes very properly refused his request, full well knowing that the Avondale Memorial Church pastor had already announced Pastor Cooke's guilt in writing and that the Conference president was determined to keep them out of church membership. To have submitted to such a request would have been to condone the lack of justice and the desire to achieve a predetermined result now characteristic of God's church in Australia.

Much of our church leadership in Australia has, by its actions, developed a serious credibility gap. Only these leaders, or their successors, can alter this most distressing situation. They will not do so by pursuing the dictatorial methods in effect at present. These are actions which should be reserved for worldly politicians. They have no place in our church.

Indeed, Jesus declared that such dominance by pastors was founded in pagan practices.

But Jesus called them [His disciples] unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be

your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. Matthew 20:25-27.

It is paramount that each ordained pastor and all laity ever remind leaders who overstep their God-ordained prerogatives of their error. Today, too many men are afraid that God cannot protect their ministries if they speak against blatant abuse of leadership authority. Others, in both the laity and the ministry, fear that the positions of their children in God's work will be jeopardized if they speak up. Is our God impotent, that He cannot care for such matters?

After all it is our God who gave us the example of Isaiah for us to follow;

For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake will I not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence. And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. Isaiah 62:1,6,7.

Further our God has promised that

If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained. 1 Timothy 4:6.

We have documented the Cooke case rather fully, although much more documentation is available (see Appendix B), because it does illustrate very clearly the presence of unChristlike actions at high levels of God's church. All too often mention of these facts is disregarded as exaggeration.

But here the evidence has been presented. God's people are being seriously mistreated by many in leadership. This fact is beyond dispute. Leaders have mistaken their role in the church and most laypeople have been reduced to little more than puppets in the hands of these leaders. Scripture testifies that this is not God's plan for His church. It is the local church membership which has chief human authority in God's church. But above them and of infinitely greater authority is Jesus Himself. Scarcely is He considered in many of these matters, for His guidance is not sought.

Sister Kerry Harrison recorded that

To add to the pressure of forcing the issue when we could not come to a decision, [the Church Ministries director for the North New South Wales Conference] declared, when we decided on a season of prayer, "You can go away and pray if you want to, but you must come back with the decision to rescind [the motion accepting the Cookes into membership of the Boolaroo Church]." — Letter written to the president of the South Pacific Division by Sister Kerry Harrison, January 24, 1990. See Appendix A for the full text of Sister Harrison's disclosures.

Once more we challenge the pastors and elders in our midst to throw off the fear of church administration which commits them to silence when the church is placed in danger. Sister White counsels us that

In the work of reform to be carried forward today, there is a need of men who, like Ezra and Nehemiah, will not palliate or excuse sin, nor shrink from vindicating the honor of God. Those upon whom rests the burden of this work, will not hold their peace when wrong is done, neither will they cover evil with a cloak of false charity. They will remember that God is no

respector of persons, and that severity to a few may prove mercy to many. They will remember also that in the one who rebukes evil, the spirit of Christ should ever be revealed. Prophets and Kings, 675.

It is not without significance that this passage was written as a commentary upon the work of Ezra, a scribe, and Nehemiah, a layman, in condemning the evil practices of the priests and Levites. Nor should each reform-minded pastor and layperson overlook the important counsel contained in the last sentence of the above quotation. There is a vast difference between biting criticism, even of wrong, and a ministry of genuine reproof. Each of us needs to ask God's guidance in this matter. But God's grace will never be manifested in what Sister White describes as "false charity" to the wrongdoer.

Again we exhort every pastor and church leader to cease protecting their own reputations and positions by stifling their expressions of rebuke when men in leadership roles let down the principles enshrined in God's word. Once more we can learn lessons from the layman, Nehemiah.

As he came into contact with evil and opposition to right, he took so determined a stand that the people were roused to labor with fresh zeal and courage. They could not but recognize his loyalty, his patriotism, and his deep love for God; and seeing this, they were willing to follow where he led--Prompt and decisive action at the right time will gain glorious triumphs, while delay and neglect result in failure and dishonor to God. If the leaders in the cause of truth show no zeal, if they are indifferent and purposeless, the church will be careless, indolent, and pleasure-loving; but if they are filled with a holy purpose to serve God and

Him alone, the people will be united, hopeful, eager.
Prophets and Kings, 676.

It will be noted by the perceptive reader that here Sister White plainly associates the church with the people, not with the leadership, as seems to be the impression of most Seventh-day Adventists today.

God's call is for the purity of His church, a church

not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.
Ephesians 5:27.

This ideal will never be achieved while pastors and laity yield to the wrongful dictates of church leaders, counting such acts of cowardice as loyalty to God and His church. Such men and women have not studied God's counsels, but rather have considered their own reputations and positions of more value than the reputation of God and His church.

The lessons to be learned from the Cooke affair are manifold. This episode illustrates that we are as capable of injustice and political actions as are more powerful churches. We have no more tolerance of the genuine reformer than did the Jews. Even worse is the discovery that some church leaders have come to accept it as their right to dictate matters of conscience. Complementing this serious deviation from God's plan is the servile attitude of numerous laypeople, who care little for the personal reputation and rights of fellow members, rather esteeming their own reputations in the sight of church leaders as more important than doing right.

It now appears that in some colleges our theologians have almost free rein to teach the most fearful errors, knowing that even conservative leaders will do little to rectify the

situation by roundly condemning the error and utilizing the Scriptures to present irrefutable truth.

The danger of the *Church Manual* as a tool of ecclesiastical oppression has been fully documented. It is time to discard the use of an instrument which does not serve its stated purpose of bringing order and propriety into the operation of the church, but rather restricts the God-ordained rights of believers.

The issuing of ministerial credentials is rapidly becoming a matter of whim, rather than calling. Pastor Cooke's calling to the ministry must be evident to any fair-minded observer. His years of successful labor for God verify this fact. He has not disgraced his calling by acts of dishonesty, apostasy, or immorality. Rather, he has nobly and courageously defended God's truth. Like other pastors over the past quarter-century, demands were made for proof of his charges against Avondale College. But when such documentation was provided, it was ignored. In 1976, eleven pastors and five laymen offered proof beyond dispute of Dr. Desmond Ford's erroneous teachings at Avondale before twenty church leaders. Dr. Ford was exonerated. Had not the General Conference intervened, he would undoubtedly still be teaching at Avondale. Yet when men conscientiously make calls for a return to the teaching of Bible truths in our colleges, they are condemned upon rumor, gossip, marginal evidence, and misrepresentation, and their motives are maligned as well. It is time that ministerial credentials be withheld from men clearly in breach of the calling to which those credentials testify. Nor should they be withdrawn from any man for less than weighty cause.

Chapter 12

Credentialed Immorality

The number of known adulterers among our ministry is growing. This fact should not surprise us, for even in Sister White's day she wrote,

Fornication is in our ranks; I know it, for it has been shown me to be strengthening and extending its pollutions. *Testimonies to Ministers*, 427

Many church members, themselves committing similar sins, feel comfortable with ministers who share their same bent to serious sin. Such members will defend these ministers, crying out for a spirit of forgiveness. But many of these men seek forgiveness of neither God nor man.

The most notable contemporary case is that of a leading American pastor. It is not our purpose to charge that he has committed adultery. But Mrs. Claudia Burrow has done so publicly, and in writing. Her allegations have been largely supported by the pastor's former secretary, Mrs. Judy Wright.

Grave doubts have been engendered. The words of the General Conference president at the 1989 Annual Council, in which he suggested that the matter be set aside since there are many things we will not know until we are in the kingdom, did absolutely nothing to allay the suspicion that at the highest level of the church serious doubts are held.

The Texas Conference, with the acquiescence of the president of the General Conference, deputed Dr. Robert Wilson, then director of pastoral care at the Review and Herald, to make a thorough investigation of the allegations. A section of the report that Dr. Wilson made is to be found in Appendix F.

Dr. Robert Wilson's findings could be summed up in his own words before the Texas Conference Committee which examined Mrs. Burrow's allegations on October 22, 1987. He stated,

I in no way found Claudia to be inconsistent or utilizing fantasy-type statements. Simply put: no one has proven her wrong, and no one has proven [the pastor] right. *Unrighteousness Uncovered*, published by Fred and Claudia Burrow, 31.

If these two women are presenting false evidence, they are taking a fearful risk in a country such as the United States, where legal settlements for defamation of character often run into millions of dollars.

It may be felt that the pastor is refraining from taking the matter to court in view of God's counsel in 1 Corinthians 6:1-8. If this is so, we respect his decision.

However, this passage of Scripture does approve of church trials in such matters. Such a trial is now mandatory, for there can be only two possibilities. The first is that the pastor is guilty of adultery and therefore should be dismissed from the ministry.

It is to be recognized that in the case of moral fall by any minister in violation of the seventh commandment, he has by that transgression made void his ordination to the sacred office of the ministry. In such cases it is the duty of the Conference which last issued him credentials to annul his

ordination and withdraw his credentials, thus divesting him of all authority and privileges that pertain to the gospel ministry. See *Manual for Ministers*, 1977 edition, 38, 39.

Sister White has warned us that

The youth, for misdemeanors of a comparatively light character, are treated with much severity; but when men and women of large experience, who have been considered patterns of piety, are revealed in their true character--unsanctified, unholy, impure in thought, debased in conduct--then it is time for such to be dealt with in a decided manner. The greater forbearance that is exercised toward them has only had, as far as my knowledge extends, the influence to cause them to regard their fornication and adultery as a very light matter, and all their pretense has proved to be like morning dew when the sun shines upon it. *Testimony to Ministers*, 426, 427.

There is a second possibility--the two women may be spreading vicious and false rumors. If that be true, each must be put under church censure and, if unrepentant after an appropriate period of church censure, they should be disfellowshipped, having proved themselves unworthy of church membership. Admittedly, such an action may only be taken by the respective churches which hold their memberships.

That the accused pastor is still in possession of ministerial credentials and performing all the functions of a minister, while at the same time his two accusers are members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in good and regular standing, is an intolerable situation.

Allegations have been made that the pastor is being protected because of his many friends in high places within the church. Others believe that our publishing houses feel they

cannot bear the financial loss which would inevitably result if he were dismissed from the ministry. This pastor is one of the most popular denominational authors, and large inventories of his books are held around the world. The Pacific Press continues to publish his works, despite the serious questions that have been raised. Surely prudence demands a more cautious policy lest the inventory of his books grow, further placing financial constraints upon proper action against him if found guilty.

Little heed is given to the fact that his books now are freely laced with the *New Theology* errors concerning righteousness by faith. They are of scant benefit to our people and in some cases highly dangerous. If our book editors had shown more care and had rejected the pastor's manuscripts, they would not now be in this plight.

At times, the pastor has directly contradicted the plain words of Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy in his writings. This fact has been well documented in the book, *A Saving Relationship*, written by Lloyd and Leola Rosenvold. The Rosenvolds quote from the pastor's article in *Insight*, May 15, 1979, where he suggested that to accept a definition of sin as transgression of the law (1 John 3:4) is to be legalistic, and to endorse "perfectionism and behaviorally orientated Christianity."

Yet Scripture provides but one definition of sin, and that is the one this pastor discarded. Sister White states that 1 John 3:4 is the sole definition of sin. *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, 951.

The pastor's preferred definition is "any life that is apart from God." *To Know God*, 22.

In his *Insight* article the pastor stated that by using his preferred definition we need not have a Saviour with a nature the same as ours, and

Perfection of character must be seen in terms of relationship, not in terms of spelling out ethical and moral options.

Subtle, dangerous perversions of truth, such as these, are now liberally sprinkled throughout the pastor's books.

There is little doubt that many persons close to the situation have serious questions concerning his integrity. But if he is innocent of the allegations, then the pastor has the right to be declared unequivocally innocent regarding these allegations and to see his accusers dealt with appropriately.

If he is guilty, we as a church body are doing him great harm and imperiling our own salvation. God solemnly declares,

When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Ezekiel 3:18.

Judy Wright has made an allegation that the former president of the Southwestern Union Conference tutored the accused pastor as to how to answer questions when confronted by the investigating committee.

He [the accused pastor] said, "[The former president of the Southwestern Union Conference] stopped by my office and offered his help. He says that he has counseled a number of other ministers through similar crises, and that every one of them are still in the ministry." He said, "[the former Union president] advised me to deny everything. In fact, it sounded like

he thought I should deny everything, whether I was guilty or not." He said that someone in the conference who is sympathetic had secretly offered a copy of the questions he was going to be asked, and given it to him. He said that he and [the former Union president] had spent several hours going over the questions, and rehearsing answers that would satisfy the questions without assuming guilt. — Letter of Mrs Judy Wright to the president of the Pacific Union Conference, April 16, 1989.

The former Union president's alleged claim that he had gotten other ministers off on similar charges by use of his answering technique would be scandalous if confirmed. This charge requires urgent and searching investigation. If such practices are entering God's church at such a high level, we are truly facing shocking times. A minister who aids and abets an adulterer surely would merit no less penalty than the man he assisted.

Mrs. Burrow also asserted that efforts were made to protect the accused pastor. On September 21, 1987, the president of the Texas Conference wrote to Mr. and Mrs. Burrow stating

that it was their desire to continue to support [the pastor] and his ministry. The letter said that hearings of such magnitude could jeopardize the continued ministry of [the pastor]. *Unrighteousness Uncovered*, 29.

However, he did allow their right to a hearing.

Nevertheless, on September 28, 1987, a member of the Conference committee, with the permission of the current president of the Southwestern Union Conference, visited the Burrows, and

spent some 30 minutes trying to discourage the Burrows from having this meeting. . . . She said that Claudia did not stand a chance with this committee because they would all be biased and that 75 percent of them would probably not believe her. She told Claudia that almost all of the people on the committee were men and that it would be an awful experience for Mrs. Burrow to go through. Ibid.

This committee member proved correct in her predictions for, following the investigation by the Conference Committee on October 22, 1987, it was voted

That sufficient evidence was not presented to support the allegations against [the accused pastor], therefore, we continue to support his ministry. Ibid., 35.

In fact, much damning evidence had been tendered. Two observers at the meeting disagreed with the committee conclusions. Dr. Robert Wilson declared,

Mrs. Burrow had very much evidence, credible evidence. Ibid.

And Pastor Floyd Bresee, ministerial secretary of the General Conference stated in the meeting,

that it was not true that Mrs. Burrow did not have enough evidence. Ibid.

Certainly the pastor's response in the meeting did not generate confidence.

[He] came in and said that he "did not wish to discuss any moral issues." The committee tried very hard to get him to answer questions, but he refused. Ibid.

It is little wonder that even a lenient committee was constrained to record in its official minutes that it had

grave reservations regarding . . . [the pastor's] refusal to answer questions which executive committee members wished to ask. Ibid.

The pastor had also refused to answer a vital question when interviewed by Pastor Bill May, president of the Texas Conference and Pastor Cyril Miller on December 5, 1986, at the Southwestern Union office.

Question: Where did you meet her [Mrs. Burrow] for counseling?

Answer: I do not feel that answering that question would add any light on the subject. I meet my counselees in many places and at different times. Ibid., 19.

The efforts to cover up the matter and to hinder a full investigation do give grounds for serious concern. Mrs. Burrow asserted that during the committee meeting, the former Southwestern Union Conference president, who Judy Wright claimed coached the accused pastor, asked Pastor May, the Texas Conference president,

When are you going to shut that girl [Claudia Burrow] up? Ibid., 32.

To his credit, Pastor May answered,

When she gets through. Ibid.

An alarming side issue is that Pastor May is no longer in denominational employment. If our church has reached a point where favored persons are protected, despite serious breaches of conduct, we are in deep trouble.

Mrs. Burrow has also reported that ten women have come forward and claimed that they were sexually propositioned by the pastor. Even more serious is her claim that

The Southeastern California Conference president, and other officials, have reported that these women had been contacted, and that none were willing to come forward and face [the accused pastor] with their accusations. However, recently, elders from the Oakhurst Church in California investigated, called the women, whose names were provided by Judy Wright, and discovered the following: (1) The women *all* reported that *no one* from the conference had ever contacted them (2) *All* the women were willing to come forward to testify, except for one. *Unity by Cover Up*, Fred and Claudia Burrow, 19.

These are serious charges. It is mandatory that these ten ladies of virtue be heard. If the claim made in the above quotation is correct, then the president of the Southeastern California Conference must face a day of reckoning for his deliberate attempt to cover up the acts of a minister accused of serious moral sin. If the charges are faulty, action must be taken against the elders of the Oakhurst Church.

It would be a matter of the most serious concern if leadership in God's church now covered up such evils among ministerial ranks. God's people dare not rest until these accusations are impartially examined in a manner which will restore confidence among the flock. No man, no matter how elevated his position, must be exonerated if he is involved in an alleged cover-up of this magnitude. There is no hope for our church unless we openly and fairly clear up this sordid matter. At such an inquiry, failure of any of these accused pastors to answer appropriate questions in a straightforward manner, in detail, should be given proper weight in deciding their guilt. It is intolerable to accept the type of refusals and vague answers which the Texas Conference accepted from the accused pastor, using these as a basis for finding no evidence to discontinue his ministry.

It would almost appear that in some areas of the world field we have largely narrowed the grounds for loss of ministerial credentials down to a single issue--that of protesting apostasy in the church, especially when those cited are the ones who hold the power to revoke the ministerial credentials.

Have we reached a moral stage in our church little better than that of the Mormons? Dallin H. Oaks, one of their twelve apostles, stated in a meeting with religion instructors at Brigham Young University, that

Criticizing *leaders* of the church was especially onerous. "Evil speaking of the Lord's annointed," Oaks said, "is in a class by itself. It is one thing to deprecate a person who exercises corporate power or even government power. It is quite another thing to criticize or deprecate a person for the performance of an office in which he or she has been called of God. *It does not matter that the criticism is true.*" *A Gathering of Saints*, Robert Lindsay, Corgi 1990, 202.

Certainly apostasy among the ministry seems to be no bar to the holding of ministerial credentials; financial dishonesty is often overlooked; and immorality no longer is an absolute ground for dismissal. This fact highlights the grievous action of the Trans-Tasman Union Conference in revoking Pastor Austin Cooke's ministerial credentials, for he had not preached apostate messages, nor had he stolen the Lord's means, nor had he committed adultery. One can only cry aloud--"Shame!" Where are we heading as a church? Is there no leader to rise up and call "Halt!"?

But what of the men and women we have mentioned? Dear brethren and sisters, take them to yourselves in prayer. The punishment of an unfaithful pastor in the day of judg-

ment is beyond contemplation. Do not despise these faithless ones but rise up and encourage each to repentance and confession. They are men and women like ourselves, for whom Christ died. They are His children. He loves them infinitely. Remember God's admonition that we

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. 2 Timothy 4:2.

We must be even more earnest in our prayers for wayward pastors since Sister White warned us

that the ministers did not escape the wrath of God. Their suffering was tenfold greater than that of their people. *Early Writings*, 282.

Further, we ourselves are miserable sinners. We dare not apply virtue to ourselves because of the fall of others.

Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. 1 Corinthians 10:12.

There are fearful ills in our church and these cry out for redress. These are open sins, not simply disputes between two people. The latter must be addressed by following the principles outlined in Matthew 18. But where there are open evils, God commands,

Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. 1 Timothy 5:20¹

The time is long past when ministerial credentials must be revalued and restored to their rightful place in God's church.

¹ See Testimonies to the Church, vol. 2, 15.

Chapter 13

Devalued Membership

On December 30, 1989, Russell attended Norwich Church in England. He stayed with dear Adventist friends, Roger and Jean Rose. Roger is an officer employed by the Government Printing Office and Jean is a dentist in private practice. We know of no more humble, dedicated Seventh-day Adventists than this couple. Yet Russell found that these good folk had been deliberately kept out of office by their church pastor. The ground for excluding the Roses and quite a number of other members from all church duties was based upon the fact that they had attended the so-called Gazeley meetings.

Gazeley is a tiny village in Suffolk, so small that probably over 95 percent of Englishmen have never heard of the place. However, within the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Britain, the name Gazeley strikes terror into the hearts of church leaders and has engendered the most scathing denunciations. One could be forgiven if he concluded that the chief evangelistic thrust of the British Union was aimed at the decimation of the Gazeley meetings.

It seems that conditions in our British church resemble those in the Jewish church in the days of John the Baptist.

The priests and rabbis had been jealous of John's influence as they saw the people leaving the synagogues and flocking to the wilderness. *The Desire of Ages*, 181.

When Christ commenced His ministry,

They arose with a new determination to put an end to the work that was drawing the people away from them. *Ibid.*

Truth-filled "unauthorized" meetings in those days also found no favor with church leadership. Yet the South England Conference can blame only themselves for the existence of these meetings. They were given the first option to sponsor these inspiring meetings. A short history is worthy of record.

In 1984, while medical director of Enton Medical Centre in Surrey, England, Russell was asked to speak at the South England Conference camp meeting at Bognor Regis. While attending, he approached the president of the South England Conference suggesting that Colin could present some meetings during his proposed visit early in 1985. Hartland Institute had run two highly successful revival seminars, one in California and the other in North Carolina, and Russell believed that our people in Britain would likewise benefit. The president knew Colin well, as they had worked together in Jamaica when Colin was president of West Indies College. After some planning in conjunction with Pastor Harold Calkins, president of the British Union, it was arranged for the meetings to be held in the New Gallery in London.

Just prior to the meetings, Russell suggested to the director of nursing at Enton Medical Centre, Mr. Michael Thompson, that he send a note to each pastor in the South England Conference suggesting that each notify his congregation of

the meetings. This very reasonable approach caused an incredible storm, leading to the late cancellation of the venue. The reason given by the South England Conference leadership was that it was improper for Russell to have circulated the ministers directly. One could hardly have believed that he was residing in a country of freedom. Pastor Calkins remained supportive.

At that late stage we were left with little option but to locate an alternative hall for the meetings. It was a great disappointment, for those messages would have proved to be a great blessing to God's flock, as they had been in the United States. In North Carolina, Pastor Robert Pierson had attended, and he made a very positive speech at the conclusion of the meetings.

A hall in the remote Surrey village of Witley was booked. It was most difficult to publicly notify of the alteration of venue. Public transport to the village was poor. But to our surprise approximately 200 souls attended, almost all from the white segment of the church. It is probable that the majority of black members did not learn of the meetings.

The meetings inspired those in attendance. Soon Russell found he had preaching appointments in churches as far afield as Coventry and Cambridge. Over the pastor's objections the church board voted to request a Hartland Bible Conference at Coventry, as did the Cambridge Church with the strong support of their pastor, Paul Smith. The meetings in Coventry took place despite the fact that on two occasions the president of the North British Conference visited the Coventry church with the express purpose of discouraging the board from holding the meetings. But so much Conference pressure was placed upon Pastor Smith that he felt forced to cancel the meetings arranged for his church in Cambridge.

Providentially, Richard Humphrey, a member of the Bury St. Edmonds Church, was visiting Pastor Smith when Hal Mayer of Hartland Institute rang the pastor to discuss final arrangements for the proposed meeting. During that conversation Pastor Smith informed Brother Mayer that the South England Conference leadership had forced him to cancel the meeting. Richard Humphrey spontaneously telephoned to offer his residence as an alternative location for the meetings. He lived with his mother and family in a large old Anglican rectory in Gazeley. So successful were these meetings that they have been held at regular intervals ever since. At times it has been necessary to pitch a large tent in the grounds in order to accommodate the crowds which have come from all over Britain. But had the conference leadership not vetoed the Cambridge Church Bible Conference, the Gazeley meetings would never have emerged.

The preaching of the old Adventist faith has caused incredible resentment among a church leadership, which we would have thought would be seeking to inspire such messages in the hearts of their flock.

But many ministers in England perceive it to be their loyal duty to use any means possible to prevent their congregations from hearing the powerful Bible-based truths presented at Gazeley. The editor of the British Union *Messenger* has been foremost in using his post to discourage attendance at the meetings; but his statements have rather served as valuable advertisements. Little by little the attendance of black brethren and sisters has grown to close to fifty per cent, and it is almost certain that, on the weekends when Gazeley meetings are held, there will be found one of the largest gatherings of white believers in Britain on that Sabbath day.

Many of God's people in England feel starved for the special truths for these last days. As in many other Western countries, few pastors appear to be preaching these truths; and it is these truths, alone, which will strengthen the faith of the flock. Many report that Sabbath after Sabbath they hear sermons which, if not presenting error, could be equally heard in any Anglican, Methodist, or Presbyterian church the following day. Such preaching is just not good enough in these last days. Sister White emphasizes that God's people today need to hear present truth.

There are many precious truths contained in the Word of God, but it is "*present truth*" that the flock needs now. I have seen the danger of the messengers running off from the important points of present truth, to dwell upon subjects that are not calculated to unite the flock and sanctify the soul. Satan will here take every possible advantage to injure the cause. But such subjects as the sanctuary, in connection with the 2300 days, the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus, are perfectly calculated to explain the past Advent movement and show what our present position is, establish the faith of the doubting, and give certainty to the glorious future. *Early Writings*, 63.

Yet many of our pastors appear to be unacquainted with such instruction. Because of the eagerness of the people to hear God's special truths they experience the full measure of ecclesiastical displeasure.

At the conclusion of the church service at Norwich Church on December 30, 1989, Russell spoke to the fine young visiting pastor who had preached that day. He had been well tutored by his superiors about those who attended the Gazeley meetings. He suggested that he feared that these people were critical and divisive. Clearly he had never attended a Gazeley

convocation or he would have formed an alternative view. Many confuse concern with criticism.

But there is, it is true, much criticism and many divisive activities in Britain and one must deplore these. Russell attended a number of meetings in the British Union office in 1984 and 1985. He was shocked as he heard the criticism of their godly Union president, Pastor Harold Calkins, by a segment of the British leadership. Both white and black leaders were at fault. He has attended many meetings around the world but he has never witnessed such vindictiveness from leaders anywhere else. It ill behooves these men to level the charge of criticism against God's flock.

So heavy was the criticism of Harold Calkins (an American) in one of these meetings, and so gracious his response to this criticism, that Russell made a private comment to him at the conclusion of the meeting. "Harold," Russell said, "I have concluded that there are only two possibilities. Either you swear under your breath or you are fit for translation, and I suspect it is the latter." Until British leaders cease their severe criticism of men like Pastor Calkins, they can never expect to have similar charges against God's humble flock taken seriously.

That this spirit of biting criticism still prevails may be seen in an editorial in the British Union *Messenger* in which the editor laid a stinging attack upon the *Sabbath School Quarterly* on the subject of the Book of Leviticus.

In the youth classes where, despite the best efforts of the teacher, Leviticus is crushing the spiritual life out of sensitive souls--abandon the lesson pamphlets!

We have the editor's assurance that should we accept his advice: "No lightning bolt will strike your church, I promise you." According to the editor's estimate,

Leviticus is clearly for the spiritually discerning and the Ph.D.s (each quotation in this section is from British Union *Messenger*, February 17, 1989.)

The editor did suggest alternative areas to study such as the Gospel of John and the book *The Desire of Ages*. His third alternative, *How to Make Christianity Real*, was another matter. Perhaps the editor was unaware that the Bible was

designed for the common people; and the interpretation given by the common people, when aided by the Holy Spirit, accords best with the truth as it is in Jesus. *Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 5, 33.

His charge that "Leviticus is crushing the spiritual life out of sensitive souls" comes perilously close to laying this charge upon the Author of the book. We believe that the editor, in his criticism of the *Quarterly*, has made this charge unwittingly. But it is a most serious one.

The reason that the study of the book of Leviticus caused so much ire is not a complete mystery. In a country where a considerable segment of the white believers do not uphold the sanctuary message, character perfection, or health reform, this book is a standing rebuke. We can report that our believers in Malaysia did not have the same difficulties with that *Lesson Quarterly* as seemed to be the case in Britain, nor did the folk who attended the Gazeley meetings. /

The charge of divisiveness is a serious one. Ever since Satan's error provoked division in heaven, he has successfully convinced many folk that it is truth rather than error which fuels division. As Russell observed, the fact that in the Norwich Church some of the most dedicated members had been arbitrarily denied church office by the church board, led by the church pastor, demonstrated perfectly clearly

where the source of divisiveness originated. While these members do not seek office and are busily involved in daily witness, they are prepared to faithfully serve their church as they have done in the past. The church membership of these people has been seriously devalued.

But the situation is even more serious than this. Brother Graham Cabbin, Jean Rose's father, has a long record of lay church service. He, too, has fallen under the decree of the Norwich Church which excludes him from those who may serve in the church. This tactic has not hindered a powerful witness to unbelievers. Brother Cabbin has three souls thoroughly prepared for baptism. Yet in the era of Harvest 90 and global strategy, the Norwich Church pastor has adamantly denied this right to these candidates on the sole ground that their attendance at the truth-filled Gazeley meetings disqualifies them.

Brother Mark London, one of those prepared for baptism by Brother Cabbin, was informed that

It is not simply a matter of attending the Gazeley meetings. It is what that organization stands for that makes the difference. It would not be overstating it to say they are generally extremely critical (even condemning) of the official church organization, the ministry of the church, and the leadership. — Letter written to Brother Mark London by the Norwich Church pastor dated Nov. 22, 1989.

It will be noted that the church pastor does not perceive his own personal and tasteless criticism of his flock and others as meriting condemnation. His attack upon humble laymen and laywomen is unworthy of his office.¹

¹ In 1991, Brother and Sister Cabbin were disfellowshipped, and other faithful workers were asked not to attend church.

Contrast this attitude with that of another case thousands of miles away in Australia. We do not give full details in order to preserve the feelings of the dear saintly sister who reported the matter personally to us. She was delighted, while serving in an overseas post, to receive a letter from her granddaughter which brought the joyous news that she had decided to be baptized. So thrilled was this grandmother that she hastened to her homeland in order to witness the ceremony. Her joy was muted with her first view of her granddaughter wearing bangles and necklace and heavy make-up. She was further dismayed to learn that her granddaughter played tennis on Friday evenings and was participating in a *de facto* marriage relationship. Thinking that the church pastor must be unaware of these two facts (although he could not have failed to notice the girl's worldly appearance), the grandmother approached the pastor who had "prepared" the young woman for baptism. She was amazed to learn that the pastor was aware of her granddaughter's life-style. She therefore posed what she regarded as a purely rhetorical question, "Do you really think that my granddaughter is ready for baptism?" "Oh yes," the pastor replied, "I do not regard baptism as the end but as the beginning. She will grow after baptism." It was a case of very stunted growth. After attending church for a few Sabbaths following her baptism, the young woman predictably found other activities more alluring on most Sabbath mornings. She was, however, another statistic in Harvest 90.

While this is manifestly an extreme case, it does highlight, by contrast, the perversity of the Norwich Church in denying dedicated Seventh-day Adventists baptism on such paltry grounds. Where are we in our church when baptism is offered to obviously unconverted souls, while those who

have a new-birth experience are denied this rite simply because they wish to hear the old Adventist faith preached? Church pastors must not devalue the membership of God's church, either by offering membership to those who do not love Jesus sufficiently to obey Him, or denying it to those who do. There must be no arbitrary efforts to control the consciences of others.

We must not forget the diligent efforts of the Pharisees in their endeavor to prevent God's children hearing the words of life from Christ's lips. They believed that they were protecting God's church, but in reality they were protecting their own positions of usurped authority, and withholding truth from the people. The Roman Catholic Church has frequently adopted a similar policy.

It is no doubt a symptom of the compartmentalization of our minds that many of us extol the virtues of the ministry of John Wesley, while condemning the even more important ministries of preachers of the three angels' messages in God's church.

The attitude of the Anglican Church to Wesley's preaching was virtually identical with that of many church leaders today toward supporting ministries.

One of the early leaders of Methodism was

George Whitefield, the son of a Gloucester inn keeper, had been one of the younger members of the Holy Club at Oxford. He was a preacher of fiery eloquence and by the time the Wesleys returned from Georgia he was already well known as an evangelist on both sides of the Atlantic. Early in 1739 he was in Bristol where, like Wesley, he found many of the churches shut against him. So he began to preach in the open air. John Vickers, *John Wesley, Founder of Methodism*, Ladybird, 1977, 21.

Despite the fact that John Wesley had been ordained an Anglican deacon in 1725 and a priest in 1728, so antagonistic were the Anglicans to the preaching of the truth by independent ministries that, when "In 1742, seven years after his father's death, he revisited Epworth [in the county of Lincolnshire]" (Ibid., 23), he was repulsed by the church members among whom he had grown up and to whom his father had ministered as their pastor.

He offered to preach in the parish church, but was rebuffed. So he waited until the church service was ended and then preached from his father's tombstone in the churchyard. Ibid.

While preaching in the city of Bath, John Wesley was accosted by Beau Nash, an arrogant man who demanded to know by whose authority he preached. Wesley gave the same reply as is today given by devout preachers of truth: "By the authority of Jesus Christ." It is possible to preach both inside churches and outside churches with this, the only proper authority for one's ministry. Similarly, many men preach inside church and others outside of the church, devoid of such authority.

Like many who today loudly condemn the preaching of God's precious Word without ever hearing it for themselves, Nash did precisely this. Nash claimed the right to make his judgments upon "common report." Wesley retorted,

Common report is not enough. Give me leave to ask, Sir, is not your name Nash? Sir I *dare* not judge *you* by common report. Ibid., 24.

Seventh-day Adventists, whose faith arose largely out of Methodism, must examine their motives in upholding the fine witness of Wesley while vehemently closing their ears to messages far more vital than his, when presented by godly

preachers of the Word in supporting ministries. Surely we do not wish to display the rank intolerance of preachers of truth evidenced by eighteenth century Anglicanism.

On January 28, 1990, the first person was cast out of the British Church for her attendance at the Gazeley meetings. Sister Margaret Murray, a dedicated lady of Eastbourne Church in Sussex, paid this penalty for her fidelity. When men and women can retain their church memberships despite gross and open sin, the action against this good woman can be seen in its proper light. Prior to the meeting Sister Murray asked for an agenda and the right to call witnesses. These proper requests were heartlessly denied by the church pastor.

The charges upon which Sister Murray was convicted were:

1. She held "off-shoot meetings" in the same building as Eastbourne Church is held. (In fact Sister Murray only arranged two meetings--for Pastor and Mrs. Thomas Davis and Pastor Austin Cooke. Pastor Davis, a Canadian, is a currently credentialed minister of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He is a former missionary to India and the Philippines and a former book editor of the *Review and Herald*. It is now clear what the definition of an "off-shoot" is in the minds of some pastors in England.)

2. She accused the ministers of the British Union of teaching New Theology. (She never has. But in truth she might have done so.)

3. She encouraged two young people to attend the Gazeley Church [*sic*]. (She did encourage believers to attend these truth-filled meetings.)

4. She sent two letters stating that the pastor asked her to resign. (She did.)

5. She refused to acknowledge church government because she failed to attend either the board or the business meetings that discussed her situation. (Sister Murray did not attend because she was denied common justice. In any case this is her right, and no minister has the least right to demand such attendance)²

The sixth charge was a hurtful personal matter totally unrelated to her church membership. It reflected very poorly upon those who constructed the accusations. The charge in no way did dishonor to this faithful and pious woman. We do not cite it here lest we cause her further emotional pain.

We have met Sister Murray on a number of occasions and have always been impressed by her godly life. If women such as she are spurned by our British church, who then is worthy of membership? Is this a clue to the fact that over the last thirty years the white membership of the British church has declined from 12,000 to 4,000?

²It is worthy of contrast that the prominent American pastor accused of adultery was exonerated because he refused to answer questions while Sister Murray was disfellowshipped, in part, for refusing to do so. The only difference of circumstance was that Sister Murray was prepared to answer in full if accorded a fair trial. The American pastor refused despite being given every fair treatment.

Chapter 14

Our Church Devalued

As we look at our church today we can only weep. Particularly in the Anglo-Saxon segment of that church, wrong practices and beliefs abound. It was in North America, North Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand, that God first established this great church. These were the areas blessed by the ministry of Sister White. Our church grew rapidly in these relatively affluent areas and the faithfulness of our believers in these regions provided the means to spread the three angels' messages world-wide.

Today we find almost zero membership growth in these territories. Indeed in many areas the church is actually losing membership. The reason is not difficult to discern. Yet few of our leaders today seem capable of reasoning from cause to effect. In the United Kingdom excuses for the pitiful growth rate abound. "We British are conservative by nature." "It might work in America, but we know from experience that such evangelistic methods would not work here." "We have to contend with a State Church." "The avalanche of black members into our church hinders our outreach to the white population." "Adventism is viewed by British people as a new-fangled American religion." "We don't wish to antagonize the British people as the Jehovah's Witnesses and Mor-

mons have done, by witnessing door to door and thus intruding upon the privacy of the Britishers' homes." And so the excuses mount. We sometimes wonder if British Adventists regard themselves as a race from another planet.

Somehow American methods work for the Mormons in Britain despite their possession of one of the most blasphemous and implausible forms of "Christianity." They have 148,000 members in Britain compared with our 17,000 of whom 13,000 are black, and only 4,000 are white. The presence of an established church, and British innate conservatism, have not prevented Jehovah's Witnesses gathering 90,000 British members.

Can we never see that it is our preaching of error, our lowered standards, our feverish desire to extinguish flames of hope such as the Gazeley meetings, that mitigate against our success in Britain?

And we must overcome our parochialism. When Granose Health Foods was in difficulties some years ago, the Sanitarium Health Food Company was asked to take it over in an attempt to emulate its own success in Australia and New Zealand. Some leaders in Britain actually desired the failure of the Australian effort, lest it demonstrate that the Australians could achieve that which the British had not. Some did their utmost to ensure the failure of the Australasian "intrusion," and it did fail, much to their relief. Such attitudes hardly augur for success, although in the last few years, God in His mercy has brought a measure of success to Granose under British leadership. But then leadership enraged the constituency by the sale of Granose Health Foods after financial reversals.

We are proud of our British heritage of heroes of faith: of Patrick, Columba, Wycliffe, Tyndale, Cranmer, Ridley,

Latimer, Knox, Wesley, Livingstone, Carey, Hudson Taylor, John Williams, and Mary Slessor. No nation has a prouder Christian record than Britain, notwithstanding its wars of aggression in the colonies and its former support of the slave trade. Among the brethren and sisters with whom it has been our privilege to meet at Gazeley are the spiritual descendants of such men and women--Christians who cheerfully suffer persecution so that their hearts can be strengthened by Bible truth. And Britain still has Christian gentlemen in the ministry and leadership who, though not understanding the issues, have dealt kindly with Gazeley attenders.

We believe that when God's people rise up and preach the three angels' messages instead of stultifying, Anglican-type sermons, they will see a reformation in old Britain that will amaze the world. God's arm is not short in Britain; let us take hold of it.

In the United States, materialism and liberalism have well nigh overtaken the church. The penchant of our ministers there to see themselves as professionals, rather than as humble servants of their Lord, has greatly devalued their ministries.

If the Seminary at Andrews University were to close, it is likely that this one act would bestow marked benefit upon the church, for there appears to be an inverse relationship between the acquisition of one of its degrees and effectiveness in soul-winning. Harsh words? Yes, they are. But when did we last examine the value of this educational institution? It is true that a few of the professors are fine, dedicated Seventh-day Adventists, but others are seen by many church members to be caught in the web of evangelicalism, and others in higher criticism. Still others are pressing the celebration and neuro-linguistic program-

ming (N.L.P.) agendas. As a result, many of the graduates are unaware of Bible truths, and yet carry a veneer of superiority.

The removal of Dr. Gerhard Hasel as dean of the Seminary in 1989 perhaps marks the final limit of the usefulness of the Adventist Seminary. While many excuses were put forward, it is seen that his love of truth, and his desire to add men of similar convictions to the seminary theological faculty, found no favor with the powerful liberal wing of the church. Rather, we appoint professors whose track record should exclude them from such a post. One such man taught *New Theology* principles when on the faculty of Southeast Asia Union College in the late 1970s. As a result, large numbers of the pastors he trained have now left the ministry and some no longer worship in God's church. The result of this man's work in destroying the faith of his students is still frequently referred to in Southeast Asia. Yet this man was appointed to the Department of World Mission at Andrews University. In 1990, he resigned this post. The pastors of yesteryear, who simply studied God's Word, held no sense of their wonderful academic attainments. They simply preached the Word with immense effectiveness and with a passion for souls. Thus they met with evangelistic success.

The churches in the United States give the impression of being

rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing. Revelation 3:17

They have men who see it as their duty to pour scorn upon those who seek a humble service for their Lord. These humble people are a silent rebuke to the less dedicated, and perhaps this dedication is what stirs up such ecclesiastical wrath. The repeated attacks upon Hope International and the

ministry of Pastor Ron Spear is one case in point. Hope International is to the United States what the Gazeley meetings are to Britain, and the Concerned Brethren are to Australia and New Zealand.

Hope International now publishes the finest English language message paper in the entire denomination. Its magazine, *Our Firm Foundation*, has taken the church by storm, causing reverberations as far as the *Adventist Review*, which has rapidly declined in subscriptions since the retirement of Pastor Kenneth Wood as editor. While the *Adventist Review* has adopted an editorial policy which favors the liberal wing of the church, *Our Firm Foundation* magazine publishes fine Bible-based Seventh-day Adventist messages. The response of many leaders has been to make every effort to close down this magazine or to defame its contents, while making no move to bring the *Adventist Review* back to its former editorial policy. One church leader privately explained the success of *Our Firm Foundation* magazine by stating that it fed our people while the *Adventist Review* did not. Yet, subsequently that very same leader openly wrote a scathing attack on *Our Firm Foundation* magazine. Such is church political thinking today.

/ On Sabbath February 17, 1990, a General Conference representative preached at the Hong Kong Adventist Hospital Church. In the course of his address he asserted that the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference had identified over 70 offshoot organizations related to our church, ranging from "Hope International to the homosexual lobby." With such people are humble supporting ministries classified. Many members in attendance were offended, for they highly valued *Our Firm Foundation* magazine.

/ Some years ago, in the presence of one of the vice-presidents of the General Conference, a group from the

Adventist Forums stated its aims. These were to have liberals placed in four key posts within the church. No, they did not select the post of General Conference president. They wished to control positions with far more influence than that post carries. The four posts they set as their targets were, editor of the *Adventist Review*, editor of the *Sabbath School Quarterly*, chairman of the Biblical Research Institute, and dean of the Theological Seminary. They have not fully succeeded in their aims, but they are already half way to achieving their goals.

Make no mistake, those who would destroy our faith are energetically pursuing their goals, while many of us sit by and dare not rise in protest lest our reputations be destroyed. Have we forgotten that we are servants of Him who "made himself of no reputation"? Philippians 2:7.

There is a great rush to commence Celebration churches. Already in one the ordinance of humility and the appeal for missions have been relegated to the scrap heap. In another the congregation has been encouraged to place all Spirit of Prophecy compilations in their garbage bins. Despite these facts, these churches have full Conference approval. In reality, they are churches in which the messages are so sterile that the only way to engender enthusiasm is via the psychological gobbledygook of the charismatic movement. Many more of these churches will arise as our people in the United States, Australia, and New Zealand further lose their way. At Avondale College, theology students are being energetically tutored in Celebration church techniques.

The craze for church-growth seminars is pitiful. At one point it was reported that our people in the United States paid a man \$10,000 per weekend to present such seminars. He was a pastor of the United Methodist Church, which was

losing members. Must we go to the gods of Ekron to seek help? The very fact that he demanded such a high stipend was proof beyond dispute of where his heart lay. Could we learn anything from such a man?

We recommend four great text books on church growth. Follow the messages of these books and every church member will succeed. They are Luke's book, The Acts of the Apostles, and Sister White's volumes — *Evangelism*, *Testimonies to Ministers*, and *Gospel Workers*. Most ministers enthralled by the church growth movement have all but overlooked these books.

Groups of ministers from Australia and New Zealand, led by a pastor well known as a former Avondale Theology Faculty member, trek on church-growth tours to the United States. This tactic is a scandalous abuse of God's means and pastors' time. They visit the faithless Celebration churches on the West Coast and then the Crystal Cathedral, Fuller College, and other Pentecostal strongholds. Just as well the Witch of Endor does not reside in the United States, or she may receive a visit too. Do we really believe that God entrusted the secrets of true church growth to the churches of Babylon?

A further assault upon our church and its institutions has been made by the New Age movement. That the New Age motivator, Lew Tice, was invited to speak at the Loma Linda University Church, and was paid an extravagant fee to indoctrinate staff at the Loma Linda Medical Center, is beyond defense. What fellowship can righteousness have with unrighteousness? Or Seventh-day Adventism with satanic paganism?

With great rapidity our church is being devalued by men who possess no love for truth. Yet how few voices are raised

in defense of the faith! Murmurs abound. Hand wringing is frequent. Painful wincing is commonly observed. But where are men in positions high and low, to shout forth solemn warnings against the intrusion of sin and apostasy in our midst? These are matters of eternal consequence. We are not dealing with trivia. The public silence of our leaders and pastors shames the faith once delivered to the saints. Perhaps we all look too anxiously to a quiet retirement on adequate sustentation, not realizing that Jesus will soon return. Does our God not bring us face to face with the solemn question,

Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here?
Ezekiel 8:17.

Chapter 15

Position Devalued

As a young married couple Enid and Russell attended a Young Marrieds' evening in Sydney. The guest speaker was Pastor Ernest Steed, later to be appointed Temperance director of the General Conference. He had just returned from his first visit as a delegate to the General Conference session. He related an experience he had in Scandinavia en route. There he had observed a statue entitled "The Struggle for Life." It consisted of a pole up which numerous strivers were climbing. Those ahead were stamping upon the heads of those below, while those below were clawing at the ones above in an attempt to dislodge them.

Pastor Steed said that the statue had no meaning for him — until he reached the General Conference session. While such a representation of the struggle for position at the General Conference session is at best a caricature, it must be admitted that there is a growing politicization of appointments at all levels of our church.

When one General Conference leader, just prior to the 1990 General Conference session, took the presidents of the Unions in the North American Division on a tour of the Far East with the purported purpose of exposing them to the mission field, one president asked aloud the question which many held in their minds, "What position is he running for?"

Since each Union president is almost certain to be a member of the nominating committee, this question was not altogether unreasonable.

If political instincts did indeed motivate the "generous" act of this leader, it would constitute an appalling situation. If we could only believe that we are at the top when we are in the post designed for us by God, we would not seek position. If we only believed that God will judge us at the level at which we flatter ourselves we belong, we may rather set our sights a whole lot lower.

Never before has there been so much discussion before a General Conference session concerning "candidates" for the post of General Conference president as there was prior to the 1990 General Conference. *Spectrum* magazine took upon itself to provide a list of likely "candidates." This action was quite improper, yet in keeping with general trends in our church.

Speculation had been rife as to whether the president of the General Conference was desirous of a further term of office. He had reached 70 years of age on the opening day of the 1990 session. Those seeing him as the most suitable appointee pointed out that President Reagan did not *commence* his duties as president of the United States until nearly 70 years of age. What was certain was that the president of the General Conference had made no announcement of intention to resign or retire. While some saw this fact as evidence of a desire for re-election, others believed that such a silence simply indicated the president's desire to avoid being a lame-duck president at the end of his term.

Wherever the truth lay, the president of the General Conference had not helped matters by intruding off-the-cuff humor into the situation. After proving his undoubted fitness

by climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak, at the time of the Annual Council in 1988, the president of the General Conference joked that all those desiring General Conference appointments in 1990 should likewise demonstrate their physical fitness.

During the 1989 Annual Council he further added fuel to the fire. There was a discussion concerning the issuance of honorary ministerial credentials to retired General Conference presidents. Unlike most other retired ministers who receive their honorary credentials from the Union conference in which they reside, former General Conference presidents, and former General Conference workers, receive their honorary credentials from the General Conference. This matter was raised during the Annual Council. The officiating associate secretary of the General Conference stated that it was unnecessary to discuss the matter of the issuance of honorary credentials to former General Conference presidents since none was then living. In humorous vein the president of the General Conference retorted, "And I don't anticipate any in the future." Some present doubted that the statement was mere jest.

Even more sinister were the surmisings of those who linked the about-face of the president of the General Conference, on the matter of high salaries for hospital administrators, with a desire for re-election. Those suggesting this motivation pointed out that the weakest support for the president of the General Conference was in North America. It was also noted that the great majority of Union presidents are, by convention, appointed members of the nominating committee of the General Conference. Undoubtedly the North American Union presidents, who so strongly supported the wage claim of the hospital administrators, were very appre-

ciative of the support of the president of the General Conference, and his method of engineering this unpopular measure through to a successful conclusion. One can only pray that such speculation was mere evil surmising.

One matter this speculation did raise, however, was the danger of following the practice of appointing Union presidents to membership of the nominating committee for this policy does open up the way for lobbying well in advance of the General Conference session. The Union presidents represent a powerful segment of the General Conference nominating committee. Two examples illustrate this fact. At the 1980 General Conference in Dallas, the Australasian (now South Pacific) Division was entitled to eight members on the nominating committee. Of these eight, five were Union presidents. Since these men largely determined the appointments for the Australasian Division (all the officers of the Division and the departmental directors) and since their place on the nominating committee was all but assured well in advance of the session, the option was open to attempt to influence a majority of the group. We hasten to add that we do not possess the least evidence that such efforts, in fact, occurred. But it is a real potential danger and requires attention.

At the same General Conference session, the Far Eastern Division was entitled to twenty members on the nominating committee. Of these, nine (virtually half) were Union presidents and a tenth was the president of the unattached Guam-Micronesia Mission. Again, any unscrupulous person possessing foreknowledge of a significant group of people able to influence his future may be able to make improper use of this information.

Just four weeks preceding the General Conference session in Indianapolis in 1990, six Union treasurers and twenty Conference treasurers from the North American Division went to the General Conference in order to lobby for a reduction in the percentage of tithe each Conference was required to return to the General Conference. Much of this tithe is used to finance the thrust of the church's worldwide mission program. The timing of this meeting was not coincidental. Union Conference officials recognize that within their organizations is a power structure, due to the convention of appointing Union presidents to the nominating committee, which can put untoward pressure upon General Conference leaders just before the quinquennial election. No words need to be spoken. The threat is no less real for its silent nature.

That our churches are becoming parochial and that we are losing our zest to complete the spread of the gospel worldwide is a tragic reality. If we do not preach the three angels' messages, we lose interest in their worldwide proclamation. It is unlikely that retaining more tithe in North America will add a single soul to the church. Very likely such actions will decrease our success, for it is doubtful that it meets God's plans. Already the United States has the highest ratio of pastors to members in the world, a fact that does not translate into a strong outreach and soul-winning, but weakens the role of the laity and their stewardship in supporting the church, which could lead to further political moves to reduce the percentage of North American tithe provided for the mission fields.

In actual fact the appointment of the General Conference president in 1990 was a refreshing move away from the politicization of such elections. The initial appointee, Pastor

George Brown, president of the Inter-American Division, clearly did not scheme to obtain a position he humbly refused to accept. Pastor Robert Folkenberg, the second nomination, being a Conference president, could hardly have cherished serious ambitions for the General Conference presidency. More such nominations will do much good throughout the church, for God's people, in general, object to the political methods to which some leaders seeking office have resorted.

We believe that the time has come when the matter of the appointment of large numbers of virtual *ex officio* members on the nominating committee be reviewed. As we get closer to the end of time, we cannot anticipate that the ambition of the majority of men and women will become increasingly godly. It is preferable that such an important nominating committee have no members whose place is virtually secure before the General Conference session.

Brethren, the time has surely come when we must seek God's direction in the service He wishes us to render. To do otherwise is to devalue our posts of duty. Let us take to heart the holy admonition,

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. Ecclesiastes 9:10.

Chapter 16

Devalued Freedom

In the 1970s the president of the North American Division authorized the church's attorneys to declare that our church had ceased to hold an anti-Roman Catholic viewpoint. It was stated that

Although it is true that there was a period in the life of the Seventh-day Adventist Church when the denomination took a distinctly anti-Roman Catholic viewpoint and the term "hierarchy" was used in a pejorative sense to refer to the papal form of church governance, that attitude on the Church's part was nothing more than a manifestation of widespread antipapery among conservative Protestant denominations in the early part of this century and the later part of the last and which has now been consigned to the historical trash heap so far as the Seventh-day Adventist Church is concerned.

This statement was tendered during a court case brought by Merikay Silver in California. The declaration sent shock waves throughout the Seventh-day Adventist Church. That the church at the highest level should express such a view was alarming.

In a 1986 Michigan Court case, church lawyers won their case against Dr. Derrick Proctor, who wished to sell denominational books below regular prices. The chief argument

advanced by the lawyers engaged by the church was, that it is incumbent upon the church membership to obey the voice of the church hierarchy since the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the most hierarchical church in the United States, with the exception of the Roman Catholic Church. /

Dr. Derrick Proctor's long-running law suit with the Seventh-day Adventist Church was finally decided on October 29, 1986. Proctor lost the case, in which he contended that the church and various of its entities conspired illegally to interfere in his book selling business in violation of anti-trust and conspiracy laws. The major strategy of the General Conference in the case was to convince the court that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is essentially a hierarchical church, in which the directives and orders of the General Conference have binding authority upon all other entities of the church. The General Conference submitted that, "next to the Roman Catholic Church, the Adventist Church is the most centralized of all Christian denominations in this country." Student Movement--Student Paper of Andrews University, November 6, 1986.

We strongly resent such a claim. Our church governance was designed by God to eschew the evils of hierarchism; but increasingly it is acting in this manner. This concept was not helped during the 1985 General Conference session in New Orleans where the General Conference president on at least three occasions referred to vice presidents of the General Conference as Cardinals. /

In His infinite wisdom, God established the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a bastion against the snares of hierarchism. This was the understanding of almost all leaders of our church until recent times. Almost 30 years ago, Pastor L.C.Naden, secretary of the Australasian Division,

spoke on church organization before the members of the Sydney University Seventh-day Adventist Students' Society. There he very properly explained that our church organization was *not* hierarchical, nor was it episcopal, nor was it congregational. Rather it was representative. Pastor Naden, who later was elected the Division president, stated that the only authority which a local conference has, is that invested in it by the church congregations. Thus the power of decision making rests primarily at the level of each constituent church body. Similarly, the Union conference possesses only that authority delegated to it by the Conferences and the General Conference possesses that authority delegated to it by the Unions. Each Division is considered as a part of the General Conference. In this way God provided a form of church governance that avoided the perils of papal-type power.

It is the duty of every pastor and layman to resist the growing ecclesiastical power in our midst. As ministers we are simply servants of God and His flock. It is a usurpation of authority to dictate to our people, an authority God has never bestowed upon church ministers or leaders. The power within our church rests with God, and, on the human level, with our congregations. Let them humbly use it, always aware that in the day of judgment they, too, must give an account of how they utilized that power.

This plea is not a call to discredit God's ministry. Nor is it a call for congregationalism, where each church is independent of the world body of believers. On the contrary it is a plea to place our ministers in their God-ordained role as shepherds of the flock, rather than lords over it. Any bully can get his way most of the time, but such actions, while they may generate fear, never induce true respect. Events in

Eastern Europe at the turn of this decade have demonstrated that dictators may succeed in cowing their subjects for a period, but there is general rejoicing when these despots are removed from office. The terrible extremes of the Dark Ages were orchestrated by a hierarchical clergy. May God preserve our church from such a fate.

In no area does one see the creeping sands of hierarchical principles more clearly than in the matter of the right to preach God's Word. Actions have been taken at General Conference level which are quite improper, and which devalue the freedom of every child of God. It is now contrary to General Conference policy for any person to respond directly to a call from a church to present a message on the Sabbath or at any other time, in a church located in another conference, without special ecclesiastical permission. If a church in another Division requests such a meeting, it may not take place unless the request is approved by the local Conference, the Union, and the Division in which the church is located, and also by the General Conference. Such a measure is simply wrong.

It is designed to "protect" God's people from the preaching of error, but it achieves the very opposite effect. Over and over again this policy is invoked against preachers of righteousness, while error is spread without restraint.

Let us examine a single concrete example. In 1987 Hartland Institute received a request from Skodsborg church in Denmark to present a Bible Conference. Such a request should have been the end of the matter. Hartland Institute should have been free to accept or reject the request.

However, because of the General Conference policy, the request was passed on to the East Danish Conference. The Conference approved the request. But the matter did not rest

there. It was further passed to the West Nordic Union. Once again the request was approved. From this Union the request was further considered by the Trans-European Division. At this level the request was denied. The meeting never occurred.

The pastor's request for the Hartland Bible Conference had arisen out of his burden to counter, and hopefully to reverse, the use of mystical eastern-type methods of therapy in the adjoining Seventh-day Adventist sanitarium. Thus God's principles of true medical ministry were not permitted to be set forth, nor was this tragic deviation from these principles corrected.

All Seventh-day Adventist ministers are ordained to the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church. This principle of ordination has been greatly devalued by the usurped powers at various levels of church organization by which these organizations veto invitations to preachers of the Word. This usurpation is a serious violation of church order and authority, and one which must be reversed at the first opportunity.

We shall examine this intolerable incident. It is the right of every church congregation to decide upon the names of those it wishes to occupy the sacred desk. The ministry and the Conference leadership have the prerogative to offer advice if they feel the speaker whom the church proposes to invite is unsuitable. But the final decision must rest with the local church congregation. Should a church consistently and defiantly select their speakers from among the ranks of apostates or other undesirable elements, the Conference constituency would be within its rights to sever that church from the sisterhood of churches. But the Conference has no authority to dictate the preaching plan against the wishes of the congregation.

Furthermore, it will be noticed that in the example quoted three levels of the church approved the meetings — the local church, the local conference, and the union conference. Only one level withheld approval. Yet that one organization invoked veto power, a power it does not rightly possess. Do we really believe that the Holy Spirit provides superior guidance for Division committee members to that which He provides for committee members of other organizations?

There is another important principle which has been violated in this case. We have been instructed by God's servant, under inspiration, that leaders at the center of the work should not control those at the periphery. The Division leaders undoubtedly had the right to provide counsel, but they had no true authority to enforce their views upon the Skodsborg Church. The consequence was that our Danish believers were denied the hearing, not of error, but of the precious truths which had thrilled other believers throughout the world.

Unless we demonstrate religious liberty within our church, it ill behooves us to demand it of others in their dealings with us. We recognize that the area of religious liberty within a Christian denomination is a delicate one. Could this liberty be carried to the point where a practicing Moslem was accepted into our church as a member in good and regular standing, and be afforded the liberty of preaching his Islamic faith from our pulpits? Decidedly *not*! Thus some limits have to be set. But these limits must not exclude the ministries of dedicated laymen and pastors preaching Bible truth.

It is of interest to recognize that within the very same Union — the West Nordic Union which includes the nations of Denmark and Norway — in which Hartland Institute was arbitrarily deprived of fulfilling a request to present Bible

truth, the Trans-European Division sponsored interchurch contacts by the director of the Religious Liberty Department of the General Conference. See *Adventist Review*, February 15, 1990. These meetings took place during the period October 20-26, 1989. Meetings were held with the bishop of Copenhagen, the Danish Ecumenical Council, the Council of Free Churches in Denmark (two Pentecostal denominations, the Methodist Church, the Salvation Army and the Covenant Church), the bishop of Oslo, the Council of Free Churches of Norway, the General Secretary of the Norwegian Baptist Church, the Institute for Human Rights in Oslo, and the Ecumenical Council of Norway. We must be ever so careful in such contacts. Frequently, we demonstrate more understanding, courtesy, and friendship to these good people in apostate churches than we do to the dedicated members of our own church.

So dictatorial have some Conference presidents become that one (the president of the Tasmanian Conference) even banned Russell in 1987 from presenting an inspiring Sabbath school mission story in Glenorchy Church in Hobart, when Russell was home on furlough from the mission field. Perhaps the most tragic fact was that the Sabbath school superintendent heeded this improper interference by the Conference president. Similar acquiescence to usurped clerical authority led to over one thousand years of utter darkness in Europe.

Many highly respected American pastors, holding current ministerial credentials and brought to Australia by laymen to impart God's precious truths, have been banned from preaching in our churches in Australia by the Division leadership. Pastors such as Bill May, Ralph Larson, Robert Wieland, Ron Spear, Dennis Priebe and many others have received such treatment.

Contrast these situations with the opening of the sacred desk at Loma Linda University Church to a Jesuit priest, a New Age philosopher and a variety of other non-Adventist preachers. We do not hear "higher" organizations vetoing such speakers. But the denial of the pulpit to exponents of the old Adventist faith is becoming all too frequent. Of course, Loma Linda University Church has a perfect right to invite such people to preach their services, although one must comment that such choices do reflect an appalling level of spirituality within the church. But we must point out that there is a fearful illness within a church organization which takes such stringent measures against its own credentialed ministers but not against men preaching devilish error.

God has sternly warned His people against fellowship with unbelievers. When Eliashib, the high priest, permitted Tobiah, the Ammonite, to occupy an apartment connected with the temple, Nehemiah

came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah, in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God. Nehemiah 13:7.

How much we may learn from this incident! Are the pulpits of our churches places to be occupied by priests representing the religion of Babylon the Great? They have no more place there than did Tobiah in God's temple.

Commenting upon this episode, Sister White stated,

Not only had the temple been profaned, but the offerings had been misapplied. This had tended to discourage the liberalities of the people. They had lost their zeal and fervor, and were reluctant to pay their tithes. The treasuries of the Lord's house were poorly supplied; many of the singers and others employed in

the temple service, not receiving sufficient support, had left the work of God to labor elsewhere. *Prophets and Kings*, 670.

The lessons to be learned from this experience of Israel are manifold. Well may we inquire whether the diminishing funds of today's church are related to our courting of the fallen churches of Babylon.

It seems that some in our churches have forgotten the lesson to be learned from the attitude of the apostles to ecclesiastical prohibitions upon their ministries. It will be recalled that, when Peter and John healed the lame man at the temple, they were arrested by the Jewish leaders, who

commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. Acts 4:18.

Peter's and John's response is worthy of examination.

Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. Acts 4:19,20.

The Jewish church leaders again arrested the two men and questioned them:

Did we not straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. Acts 5:28.

The response of the apostle is salutary:

We ought to obey God rather than men. Acts 5:29.

We should ponder these replies. It must be remembered that these incidents occurred before the year A.D. 34, for they preceded the selection of the seven deacons and the stoning

of Stephen. Thus these Jewish church leaders were, at the time of this incident, the leaders of God's earthly church. But true pastors at that time recognized that God had invested these leaders with no mandate to direct the preaching activities of another man. Every pastor who heeds a prohibition to preach God's Word is devaluing the perfect freedom which God has granted him. Even more of concern is the fact that he is confirming the unwarranted power of church leaders to restrict the ministries of other men.

The Lord has not placed any one of His human agencies under the dictation and control of those who are themselves but erring mortals. He has not placed upon men the power to say, You shall do this, and you shall not do that. . . . Far less of man's power and authority should be exercised towards God's human agencies. Brethren, leave God to rule. *Testimonies to Ministers*, 347, 348.

Strange fire has been offered in the use of harsh words, in self-importance, in self-exaltation, in self-righteousness, in arbitrary authority, in domineering, in oppression, in restricting the liberty of God's people, binding them about by your plans and rules. *Ibid.*

Jesus refused to permit His ministry to be controlled by church leaders. In this He set us a perfect example.

No synagogue could have received the throngs that followed Him [Jesus]; but not for this reason only did He choose to teach in the fields and groves. Jesus loved the scenes of nature. To Him the quiet retreat was a sacred temple. *The Desire of Ages*, 290.

Jesus' ministry was the forerunner of many godly supporting Christian ministries, which have lighted the world, unshackled by improper ecclesiastical restraints. Jesus' inde-

pendence and His reliance upon God as His guide was a great disappointment to His disciples who, like many lay-people today, valued the applause of church leaders more than that of God.

The people gave credence to what the priests and Pharisees taught, in place of seeking to understand the word of God for themselves. They honored the priests and rulers instead of honoring God, and rejected the truth that they might keep their own traditions. Many had been impressed and almost persuaded; but they did not act upon their convictions, and were not reckoned on the side of Christ. Satan presented his temptations, until the light appeared as darkness. Thus, many rejected the truth that would have proved the saving of the soul. Ibid, 489.

The freedom God provides, however, must not be seen as an opportunity to preach any false theory. God has appointed a day in which He will judge every man. Each minister is obliged to humbly plead for God's guidance as he prepares his messages for public presentation. We have an obligation to present precious Bible truth alone.

It is possible that the dictatorial spirit seen so frequently in our midst is exacerbated by our appointment of a wide variety of presidents. Even in our medical work today we no longer have medical directors or hospital administrators, but presidents. Our college leaders are also designated by this title as are leaders at all levels of the organized church. The authors have each borne this title.

More and more men are seeing themselves in roles akin to that of the President of the United States, albeit in their restricted spheres. Sister White counseled strongly against the exertion of what she termed "kingly power."

God has not set any kingly power in the Seventh-day Adventist Church to control the whole body, or to control any branch of the work. He has not provided that the burden of leadership shall rest upon a few men. Responsibilities are distributed among a large number of competent men. *Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 8, p. 236.

Today the kings of the earth exert very little real power. Perhaps now the warning would be better understood if it were expressed in terms of "presidential power."

Sister White did not envisage presidents at any level of our church. How much better it would be to return to the divine plan, where an executive committee was appointed to direct the work of the church for the period between sessions, and one man, on an annual basis, was chosen chairman of that committee. This plan would greatly reduce the urge for presidential power and would also preserve much of our God-ordained freedom. Our church would be greatly strengthened by such an organization of leadership. Too many of our pastors have become professional administrators, and many decisions are deficient in that the one making the decision has not labored at the grassroots for many years and does not understand the challenges being met by those who are daily toiling in the harvest field. There would be less forbiddings if leaders were closer to the field.¹

¹ For a fuller discussion of this topic, see *With Cloak and Dagger*, by Hilton Meyers, available from Hartland Publications, Box 1, Rapidan, VA. 22733, U.S.A.

Chapter 17

Sacrifice Devalued

In November 1987 Russell was called to Singapore for a special meeting. He was president of Penang Adventist Hospital in Malaysia at that time. He had been informed that selected missionaries had been called in to learn the details of their new salary scheme, but he was totally unprepared for what lay ahead. An associate treasurer of the General Conference was present to explain the details.

To the surprise of the gathered missionaries they were informed that instead of being paid by the Far Eastern Division, from January 1988 their salaries would emanate from the General Conference. Even more unexpected was the announcement that their salaries would be frozen for four years and then reduced in January 1992. It was explained that this action was necessary because of a general lack of church funds. Russell's own salary was to be reduced U.S. \$216 per month in 1992. In relation to the size of his missionary salary, this reduction was substantial. Missionaries in Japan were informed that their salaries would be reduced by over U.S. \$700 per month.

The gathered missionaries were staggered. Responses varied. Russell's initial sentiment was that if the church was in a financial crisis it was his duty to accept this fact and trust God to expand the means to cover his essential expenditure.

Other missionaries adopted an alternative view and declared that this decision would force them to return to their homelands. They well knew the heavy costs of educating their children and felt that they could not do so under the new salary scheme.

But it was the answer to one perceptive question which shattered the entire group of missionaries. The one who pressed the question prefaced his remarks by stating, "In view of the cash crisis in our church, I am prepared to continue my service in the mission field at a lower salary." He then posed his question, "Could you inform us, in view of this financial crisis, how much salary cut have the more than 600 workers in the General Conference office taken?"

The associate treasurer's face reddened as he almost choked on his reply. It was indeed a telling question. It was apparent that all the sacrifice was loaded upon the missionaries, but none was expected of those in the homelands.

We believe with all our hearts that God has called us to His service. When we were first recruited to such service, we did not inquire as to the amount of our salaries. If we were interested in such matters, we would have remained in non-denominational work. God has wonderfully cared for us during our years of service. Each of Russell's sons has received a fine education. Colin's young family has been cared for well. We can testify that our God, who provided ample sustenance from the loaves and fishes, is no less skilled in stretching dollars and cents. Disappointed as Russell was that there was not a general level of sacrifice throughout the world field, this decision made absolutely no difference to his commitment to serve God in the mission field.

God's workers are His disciples. Speaking of the original apostles, Sister White pointed out,

Some of these disciples had friends dependent upon them for support; but when they received the Saviour's invitation, they did not hesitate, and inquire, How shall I live, and sustain my family? They were obedient to the call; and when afterward Jesus asked them, "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything?" they could answer, "Nothing." *The Desire of Ages*, 273.

Most people in the homeland are unaware that in a number of countries of the Far East overseas physicians now are paid considerably less than their national Seventh-day Adventist counterparts. While Russell was president of Penang Adventist Hospital, Dr. Ray Chapman and he were the lowest paid medical specialists on the staff. The American missionary doctors received a little more than Australians because their home-base deposit was higher. Our Malaysian Adventist staff specialists received considerably more. Some of these, in addition, benefitted by having their entire medical education, from the undergraduate level to the sub-specialty level, financed from hospital funds. Since post-graduate training was usually undertaken in the United Kingdom, the expenses were considerable. Russell, personally, was very comfortable with this situation. No longer did he experience the resentment, evident in the early years of his mission service, from national physicians paid below his salary level. It should be noted, however, that in some other areas in the Far Eastern Division, overseas doctors are salaried higher than national doctors. And in Malaysia overseas pastors still receive higher salaries than local ministers.

In vain did the missionary team in the Far East look for evidence of salary restraint in the home divisions. On the contrary, articles confronted them indicating that pastors in North America required considerable increases in their sala-

ries in order to finance lifestyles acceptable to professionals in their congregations, which they received. But such thinly veiled excuses for personal greed fooled no one except those who offered the excuse. Professionals are impressed by godly ministers who love God's cause sufficiently to sacrifice for it.

However, the greatest shock came with the action of the 1989 Spring Council of the General Conference, which granted top administrators in our North American hospitals in the United States exorbitant salaries — as high as at least \$150,000 per annum for top administrators at Loma Linda, Florida, and Kettering hospitals. God's people have a right to look to assembled leaders at General Conference level to provide an example of the highest order to the world field. By yielding to the avarice of our hospital administrators, these delegates did less than their duty in this respect.

So appalled was the church in general, that the *Ministry* magazine took the unprecedented step of suggesting that no longer was our North American health work likely to contribute to the finishing of God's work on earth. If this opinion is correct, then we should close every medical institution in that Division.

Perhaps it is too late in the stream of prophetic time to do this [commence new medical institutions operated on our original medical missionary philosophy]. We have had our opportunity. Perhaps now, rather than attempting to witness indirectly through medical institutions, we must simply let the church use its resources to communicate directly to the world God's final call of salvation. *Ministry*, August 1989.

We assert that it is definitely not too late to close all the hospitals of a failed system, and re-commence true medical

missionary work. God has informed us that the very last work on earth will use the medium of the medical work. Not only *may* this be accomplished, it *must* be!

One fact is salient in the development of a new, faithful medical missionary work: this work will never succeed in the hands of those who emphasize the health message, but are mute in defense of the precious faith of God. How can we complete the work of God if we will not dare defend truth within our own church? Will we have courage to defend those same truths in the world when life and limb are at stake? That would be most unlikely.

That virtually every Union president in the North American Division strongly supported the request of the Health Systems is a matter of deep concern. Some of these men presided on the various Health System boards. Some General Conference leaders wondered aloud as to the nature of the benefits the health systems had bestowed upon these men. Such a thought is too fearful to think. However, there is a great responsibility for each leader in such circumstances to report each gift and privilege, if any, he has received from such organizations. The Davenport affair demonstrated that Union presidents were not always immune to mercenary motivation. Great emphasis is laid upon the avoidance of conflict of interest in God's church, and rightly so. This requirement should not only *be* so, but be *seen* to be so.

Even more alarming were the methods employed to insure the passage of this unpopular measure. When first brought to the floor of the Spring Council, it was evident from the many hostile speeches of delegates that the measure did not have the least hope of passage. A vote should have been taken at that point and the will of the delegates accepted. But the chairman, who incredibly favored the pro-

posals, suggested that the proposal be tabled. Most delegates who opposed the measure assumed that the matter would not surface again until the Annual Council in October. They had not learned from the political maneuvers which led to the reduction of the African Divisions to two, against the will of the majority of delegates, especially those from Africa itself.

That evening, those favoring the increase in salary planned a strategy in order to insure the successful passage of the proposal. Each was privy to the fact that the matter would again be raised the following day, and so made sure to be present at the session. On the other hand, many delegates who opposed the measure, unaware that such a sensitive issue would re-surface, were absent from the session, since it was re-introduced in the last dying moments of the Council. Using this ploy, the totally unwarranted request of the hospital administrators received a narrow majority.

To his credit, Pastor David Dennis, head of the Auditing Service of the General Conference, expressed his dismay in a letter sent to about forty members of the General Conference committee. In this letter, he objected to the use of such improper procedures. Pastor Dennis, more courageously than most, reflected the views of a great number of General Conference leaders. Rarely has any matter in recent years produced greater reaction than this one. Its enactment most certainly did not reflect the general will of God's people. Already many had written off the Adventist Health Systems as being no longer a genuine church organization. For others, this action was the final evidence of the bankruptcy of the system. That the Adventist Health System (U.S.) was demolished in 1990, having lost any cost-effectiveness it may have had, is no doubt a positive move. The Regional Systems remain, however.

In reality the Adventist Health System (U.S.) has placed our church in a most unenviable situation. In November

1987, the *Adventist Review* reported that the total debt of the system was 2.2 billion dollars. The previous year that organization had made a profit of 22 million dollars. If that profit level were sustained, no interest paid, no further debt incurred, and every cent of profit utilized to pay the principal on the debt, it would take precisely 100 years to clear the debt. But, every hospital administrator knows that no hospital could possibly survive if it utilized all its profits in debt repayments. It would be left with a 1987 facility in 2087. Would we today trust our health to an 1890s hospital? Such a hospital would not even possess the simplest X-ray machine. Reports two years later indicated that the system was actually in a deepening crisis.

Health Systems apologists attempted to calm the fears of church members by pointing out that the book value of the hospitals in the health system in 1987 was \$2.9 billion dollars—700 million dollars in excess of the debt. Thus in the worst scenario, it was claimed, we could sell the hospitals and cover all outstanding debts with ease.

What was not stated was that while the debt was a fixed, unchanging sum, property values vary with market forces. Thus the book value of 2.9 billion dollars may be realistic or, more worryingly, may greatly overstate the real value. In fact, as one views the current hospital trends in the United States, the latter situation is the more likely. Because of the introduction of Diagnostic Related Groupings (DRGs), which is a system whereby hospitals are paid a fixed sum on the basis of diagnosis rather than services rendered, hospital occupancies have plummeted to the point where many hospitals, including some of our own, have been closed. Since the income from DRGs is not related to the period of stay in

hospital, the hospitals naturally discharge their patients as soon as possible. In such a circumstance market values drop.

It has been estimated that these dramatic changes in treatment philosophy in the United States will result in the number of hospital beds utilized in the year 2000 being reduced to only one third of those used in 1980. It is possible that in some areas, because of the excess of hospital beds, some hospitals will have a resale value little in excess of the value of the land upon which they are located. Yet the Adventist Health System (U.S.) in 1987 had a debt equivalent to \$200,000 upon every single hospital bed it operated. Anyone with experience in hospital finance knows the enormous difficulty of making a *profit* of \$200,000 on the utilization of a single bed. If the number of these beds is greatly reduced in line with market predictions, then the debt on each bed will rise commensurately.

However, optimists continued to state that the book value of the hospitals greatly undervalued their real saleable value. This claim was put to a rather searching test in 1987. The White Memorial Hospital in Los Angeles, one of our best-known medical institutions in the United States, had incurred operative losses of \$14,949,090 in the previous two years. Ten million dollars had been injected into its operational funding by Adventist Health Systems/West, simply to keep the institution afloat. Hard decisions were mandatory. One option was to sell the institution. It had a book value of \$38,200,000. If the words of administrators in the Adventist Health Systems were to be believed, it should have been possible to sell the institution for a sum well in excess of its book value. However, when a survey was performed, it was found that the realistic sum that could be expected from the

sale of the hospital was \$25,000,000, or \$13,000,000 *below* its book value.

Such a situation is not difficult to understand. While building values may have appreciated over the years, these do not always offset the rapid loss in value of equipment. Most major pieces of equipment today cost over \$1,000,000. Secondhand the value of such equipment is very much less. Usually accountants depreciate such equipment over five years or more. Thus, if devalued over five years, a \$1,000,000 piece of equipment would have a book value of \$800,000 after one year. Yet if it were put on the market it would be difficult to raise \$250,000. The book values of our hospitals are grossly overstated in this crucial area.

In reality the situation was much worse than that outlined above, for in 1987 the White Memorial Hospital had outstanding debts of almost \$48,000,000: Long-term debt, \$37,600,000; short-term debt, \$10,300,000--figures provided by Adventist Health Systems U.S. to presidents of Far Eastern Division hospitals in October 1989. Here was a hospital with a debt of approximately \$10,000,000 in excess of its book value and \$23,000,000 in excess of its market value. Thus if the hospital had been sold at that point, almost \$23,000,000 would have had to be found to settle all debts. Further, it will be noted that the hospital had been permitted to accrue debt well in excess of its book value, a situation contrary to policy.

Another scandalous situation, which received virtually no publicity in our publications, fully illustrates this problem. In Adventist Health Systems/North East, the board, accepting a slick presentation by its president, and failing to perform an in-depth study, agreed to the purchase of a large

number of mobile CAT¹ Scanners. It was expected that these could be shuttled between hospitals which could not afford the initial high price of these diagnostic marvels, and thus a great profit would ensue.

It seems that the Board members, as they examined the optimistic financial plan presented by the System president, did not have much understanding of the natural history of such diagnostic equipment. Invariably, initial costs are high. But shortly, prices are dramatically reduced as research and development costs are recouped by the manufacturing company. Further, the instrument is refined and improved as time passes. This course of events soon ensued in the evolution of CAT Scanners. In a brief period of time superior models were selling at half the original price. Many hospitals found them now cost effective and purchased their own machines. The whole scheme of mobile CAT Scanners collapsed without even coming close to fulfilling the predictions of the proffered financial plan.

The resale of these redundant machines proved difficult. Their undepreciated value was higher than that of new models which were capable of superior performance. The result was a loss of \$23,000,000. Where were the funds generated to meet this catastrophic loss of God's means? Over 100 homes and ten apartment blocks owned by our Hinsdale Hospital, along with some houses owned by the New England Memorial Hospital, were sold in order to meet the loss. Yet neither of these hospitals was responsible for the faulty decision which led to this financial catastrophe.

¹ CAT stands for Computerized Axial Tomography. These machines are extremely sophisticated X-ray machines, which display bodily organs much more accurately than conventional x-ray machines.

A further financial tragedy within our Health System occurred in July 1988, when it was discovered that Adventist Living Centers, Incorporated (ALC), was utilizing money from its bond payment reserve. ALC controls 57 denominationally-owned nursing homes and retirement centers located in the areas covered by Adventist Health System North Eastern and Mid America (AHS-NEMA). So severe were the problems of ALC that on July 20, 1990, they defaulted on their bond interest payments and on August 20, 1990, the bond trustee declared them to be in default, since the payment was then more than 30 days overdue.

While full information is not available, the board members of Kettering Hospital, who are suing the Seventh-day Adventist church for transfer of the hospital to community ownership, claim that AHS-NEMA is over \$100,000,000 in debt.

This matter is of the greatest seriousness to our church, for

On August 24, 1977, the North American Health Services Board, a Committee of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, having jurisdiction over all Health Care Institutions sponsored by the church and located in North America, recommended that the corporation (ALC) be granted full denominational status.—ALC Prospectus quoted in Vance Ferrell, *ALC Now in Monetary Default*, p. 1.

This acknowledgment of Seventh-day Adventist ownership places the finances of our church in severe jeopardy. It is little wonder that AHS-NEMA headquarters at the town of Shawnee Mission, Kansas, was transferred to Silver Spring near the General Conference on August 15, 1990. Only God can rescue His church from this appalling situation.

We should not be surprised by the failure of Seventh-day Adventist institutions which have followed worldly business practices rather than God's counsels, for

The most complete system that men have ever devised, apart from the power and wisdom of God, will prove a failure, while the most unpromising methods will succeed when divinely appointed, and entered upon with humility and faith. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 554.

God has warned His people that if they

let go their hold upon Him, and trust in their own power, they would be even weaker than those who had not the knowledge of God. *Ibid.*, 299.

Do the men who brought about this situation value themselves at salaries of \$150,000 annually? Or was this man and his board an aberration?

What is certain is that the action of the Spring Council in raising the salaries of its hospital administrators has had a deleterious effect upon our hospital work in the Far East, and no doubt in other overseas divisions. Many physicians now question the reason they are being asked to work for sacrificial salaries, salaries far below those available in the community, when they see no such lead from headquarters.

Some of our hospitals have even resorted to unethical practices in order to increase hospital income. Such acts shame our God and our church.

When Simi Valley Adventist Hospital gave a \$25,000 loan to a young obstetrician, it wanted something more valuable than money: his pregnant patients.

"You will attempt to bring 100 percent of your deliveries to this hospital," the loan agreement read.

"You will attempt to bring the vast majority of your elective GYN (Gynecology) cases to this hospital."

In return for "supporting the hospital with your patients," no money need be paid back. After five years, the doctor would owe nothing. The agreement concluded with a plea he keep the deal secret "for various reasons."

At least one reason was obvious: It was illegal, according to a later grand jury finding. State and federal laws bar doctors from accepting financial rewards for sending patients to hospitals.

The doctor, Vihe Azizian, an Iranian immigrant, said he didn't know the arrangement broke the law. But he had no doubt why the hospital gave him money.

"They weren't in love with my pretty eyes," Azizian said. "It wasn't a loan. It was a gift to put my patients in their hospital."

Azizian's gift was everyday business, it appears, during the 1980s at Simi Valley Adventist, a 215-bed hospital affiliated with the Seventh Day Adventist [*sic*] Church.

If Seventh-day Adventists cannot keep their business practices ethical, who can?

Interviews, along with logs, internal memos and insurance records obtained by The Associated Press, show the hospital showered doctors with hundreds of thousands of dollars in loans, subsidized rent, equipment and discounted hospital services.

One complicated deal even made it possible for doctors to get a cut when they referred patients for X-rays. The hospital kept these patients' records in a school composition book rather than its computer. . . .

Offers of interest-free loans, income guarantees and other subsidies have become commonplace across the country as hospitals compete to win physicians' allegiances. But some of the Simi Valley deals bluntly stated what most others only imply: The money was payment for patients.

Many worry that kickbacks, whether spelled out or implied, are more than technical violations of law. They can harm patients. The doctor has a financial enticement to send sick people to the hospital that gives him the best deal, not the one that gives patients the best care. . . .

The hospital gave special discounts on X-rays to some doctors, who in turn were free to charge patients the full fee. Physicians said a dual price list and a crude, handwritten record of patients' X-rays were kept at a hospital reception desk. Ethical and legal rules prohibit doctors from marking up patients' bills.

Cortland Standard, October 16, 1990.

Our heavenly Father must weep when we practice such disgraceful methods of business, jeopardizing patients' care. Yet it was administrators such as those in Simi Valley, who besmirched the name of God's church through the secular press, who felt they merited such high salaries, salaries which our leaders granted.

It is instructive to report that Malaysian specialist physicians in Penang Adventist Hospital, as from January 1, 1990, receive M \$8,000 per month (approx. U.S. \$3,200) while an Australian physician at the same institution receives just over M \$5,000 (approx. U.S. \$2,000). This figure includes the home base deposit in the case of the overseas physician. Indeed Malaysian specialists now receive more than their counterparts who are staff specialists at Sydney Adventist Hospital, living in a country where the cost of living is considerably higher. That decision of the Spring Council of the General Conference of 1989, coupled with the freezing of missionary salaries, has resulted in a situation which is bound to produce changes in our medical missionary work in the near future.

One difficulty now faced is that it is far more difficult for dedicated administrators to hold the line on salaries and promote sacrificial service to God. In the end, the old Chinese saying rings true, "The wool always comes off the sheep." The sheep in this instance are the patients. Charity services have to be reduced and fees raised in order to meet these higher salaries. Thus our mission, the one to which Russell has devoted his life, has been seriously compromised, and we object. Sacrifice has been devalued.²

² On February 14, 1990, the Loma Linda University announced that its School of Public Health "was being closed for financial reasons." *San Bernardino Sun*, February 18, 1990. This closure was to be effected on June 30, 1990. This school has stood as a symbol of uniquely Seventh-day Adventist medical missionary work for over two decades. Its closure, despite the fact that a few of the courses were projected to be offered by the School of Medicine, would be a significant act, emphasizing the virtual demise of true Seventh-day Adventist medical work in North America. Fortunately, due to the requirements of the accrediting body, the Board found it necessary to delay this proposed closure until the end of 1991. We can only pray that new thinking can prevail in this time the Lord has provided us for re-consideration.

It is also worthy of notice that in the legal action taken against Kettering Hospital demanding its return to the Kettering Community, the loss of U.S. \$23,000,000 by the Health system in its CAT Scan project has been seized upon as evidence of Seventh-day Adventist incompetence in hospital management.

Chapter 18

Religious Liberty in Action

For fifteen months preceding the 1990 General Conference session in Indianapolis, predictions were rife that David Dennis, chief auditor of the General Conference, would lose his post at the quinquennial elections. Pastor Dennis had written a letter following the 1989 Spring Council in which he set forth the political angling which had led to hospital administrators in the United States receiving exorbitant raises in salary. See previous chapter.

When the report of the nominating committee was returned on Thursday, July 12, this prediction was fulfilled. Barry Collins, the senior auditor of the Far Eastern Division, an Australian, was nominated for the position of the chief auditor. A number of people had heard of this decision on the inevitable "grapevine," which appears to be more active in General Conference nominating committees than in any other nominating committee at any level of the church. This is a healthy matter. We are not a secret society. God's children have the right to the fullest information of the functioning of their church. Anything less frequently leads to scheming and unseemly activities.

Among those alerted to the change was Russell. He decided to take an action totally foreign to his personality — to refer back the report of the nominating committee. Never in

his life at any level of the church had he taken such an action. He was unaware of any report of a General Conference nominating committee having ever been referred back. Certainly in the five General Conference sessions that Colin has attended, no such action has taken place. Others who had attended General Conference sessions from before the period of World War II could recollect no precedent.

Russell seated himself close to the microphone at the front of the Hoosier Dome, nervously awaiting confirmation of the rumor. To his delight, when the report was read, Dr. William Shea, of the General Conference Biblical Research Institute, quickly rose and referred back the nomination of auditor. Pastor Kenneth Wood, chairman of the White Estate and former editor of the *Review and Herald*, seconded the motion. Russell was not a little relieved that others shared his concerns and that he did not have to carry out his intention.

It should be emphasized that this action was not taken because of the least dissatisfaction with Brother Collins. He has done a splendid work in the Far East. Rather, this was a matter of deep concern and great significance for the future of God's church.

Dr. Calvin Rock, vice-president of the General Conference, who was chairman of the session, took the matter gracefully and agreed that further discussions would be opened for the nomination of General Conference auditor.

It was announced that any person with concerns in the matter could meet with the nominating committee at three P.M. that day. Numerous delegates expressed their concern at Pastor Dennis's failure to be re-elected, especially as rumors indicated that Pastor Dennis's letter was the lone factor in the nominating committee's failure to renominate him.

However, as is usual in such circumstances, few wished to express their concerns in a public manner. Nevertheless, sixteen men gathered to present their perceptions to the nominating committee. Among these were Dr. Shea and Pastor Wood, Dr. Walter Brown, former General Conference education director, Pastor Merle Mills, former president of the Trans-Africa Division, Pastor Lowell Bock, former vice-president of the General Conference, Pastor Carl Currie, director of the East Asia Committee, Max Mitchell, senior auditor of the South Pacific Division, Pastor John Stevens, Religious Liberty director of the Pacific Union Conference, Tom Miller, auditor of the Afro-Indian Ocean Division, Phillip Robertson, treasurer of the Southeast California Conference, and Daniel Herzel, district auditor of the General Conference. Also present were a lay businessman, two other delegates and Russell.

The newly elected General Conference president met with the group and frankly discussed the basis of the decision to choose a new auditor. He stated that there was absolutely no dissatisfaction with Pastor Dennis's work, nor did anyone challenge the facts contained in his letter, which received wide distribution. The one question was Pastor Dennis's loyalty and ethics in distributing his letter to 40 members of the General Conference committee. Those present were, therefore, quite reasonably requested to confine their remarks to Pastor Dennis's ethical conduct. Pastor Folkenberg also informed the men present that from over 220 persons on the nominating committee, Pastor Dennis received only 13 votes.

With this briefing, the sixteen men were ushered before the nominating committee. Pastor Desmond Hills (president of the Trans-Australian Union Conference), the chairman of

the nominating committee, made a few remarks and confirmed the fact that David Dennis had obtained only 13 votes.

For an incumbent to receive so few votes was surprising. However, strong rumors circulated that a united effort to depose Pastor Dennis, orchestrated by the Union presidents of North America, had influenced the other members of the nominating committee. Auditors are generally not well known outside the General Conference and thus many of the members of the nominating committee had little or no personal knowledge of Pastor Dennis's fine qualities, nor were they privy to the shameful abuse of power which had been exerted in order to obtain a massive increase in the salary of the North American hospital administrators.

Clearly, the North American Union presidents had not forgiven Pastor Dennis for exposing their curious eagerness to support this salary raise in the face of almost unanimous opposition from the North American church members.

This action against Pastor Dennis does demonstrates the manner in which a small number of members within a nominating committee can influence the whole committee. Hearing David Dennis represented as disloyal and unethical, it was understandable that one overseas member of the nominating committee could state that, "After listening to the assessment of Pastor Dennis's performance presented by the North American Union presidents and possessing no full knowledge of the total situation, we had little option but to vote against him."

Pastor Hills gave the sixteen men twenty minutes to present their case. This time limit permitted just four speakers. However, he very wisely increased this period, first by ten minutes and then by a further fifteen minutes, upon the

acquiescing vote of the members of the nominating committee. Although not all could speak in the forty-five minutes afforded the men, this was a most generous period of time in view of the heavy work of the committee.

Dr. Shea and Pastor Wood were the first speakers. They acquainted the committee members with the circumstances surrounding the writing of Pastor Dennis's letter. It was pointed out that, should this action against Pastor Dennis's reappointment stand, it would seriously challenge the credibility of the new General Conference leadership. If the desires of the former leadership were shaping the policies of the new, then clearly the great hope that had been generated by the appointment of the a new General Conference president would evaporate.

It was further pointed out that among the laity in North America there was a crisis of confidence in the fiscal integrity of the church, based upon the Davenport, Harris Pines, and other serious affairs. Should the laity recognize that an auditor who called for fiscal responsibility lost his post, then the crisis of confidence would deepen. Pastor Wood described what had occurred as being similar to having a watchdog and when the dog barked at a burglar, shooting the dog.

Perhaps, the most telling presentation was that of Max Mitchell. As an auditor, he pointed out that Pastor Dennis had acted upon the highest ethical principles of his profession. When improprieties are found at the top of an organization, the auditor is beholden to the shareholders to make them aware of the matter. Pastor Dennis had honored this principle in sharing the matter widely with church members.

Brother Mitchell further expressed the view that if Pastor Dennis was not re-elected, the independence of the church's

auditing service would be compromised, for no auditor who valued his position would again be free to report matters known to be sensitive to leadership.

That Brother Mitchell's statement had an important impact was immediately evidenced when the president of the Southwestern Union Conference (U.S.A), arose to strenuously rebut the presentation. The president suggested that Brother Mitchell's statements were irrelevant, since the Adventist Health Systems were not audited by the General Conference Auditing Service but rather by independent auditors. Thus, it was suggested, Pastor Dennis had no auditing function in this particular matter. Brother Mitchell replied that he trusted that the president did not cease to be a minister when he sat on the General Conference committee and that likewise an auditor did not cease to be an auditor when attending a Spring Council.

This Union president was not alone in showing his hand. The president of the Lake Union Conference also, later, attempted to allay the concerns of the members of the nominating committee as they heard further evidence. Moreover, as the sixteen men were leaving, the president of the Mid-America Union challenged them, asserting that there were many other matters which made Pastor Dennis unfit for the post. The following day he presented these matters to the nominating committee. However, the assertion seemed rather lacking in substance, since both the General Conference president and the chairman of the nominating committee had assured the sixteen men that there was no item other than the ethics of the letter which had influenced the decision of the nominating committee.

Dr. Stead made a strong statement in which he pointed out that in twenty-one years in the General Conference, he

sent out copies of his letters freely. He suggested that if such conduct was unethical then virtually no one would merit election. He also alluded to the use of the telephone to spread information.

One of the men stated that if the committee was looking into ethical matters, then it was imperative that the ethics of many of our administrators come under the same scrutiny as had David Dennis's. Further, he suggested, that the ethics of many of the theology professors of the Adventist college where he sent his son for ministerial training be examined, since his son had graduated totally confused on Bible truth.

Russell's contribution was brief. He simply stated that if we were discussing ethics then we needed to examine the ethics of a chairman who, sensing that a motion of which he approved would be lost, suggested that it be tabled rather than putting it to the vote. Second, they should consider the ethics of reintroducing the matter unannounced the next day with the knowledge of many of the delegates favoring the motion, but not of those known to oppose it. In the light of such ethics should Pastor Dennis's ethics be judged. Russell suggested that Pastor Dennis had lived up to the biblical injunction,

Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. 1 Timothy 5:20.

The remaining two auditors buttressed Brother Mitchell's statements.

No delegate with whom we discussed the matter was aware of a nomination to a General Conference position ever being successfully challenged. Yet, under God's blessing, on Friday, July 13, the name of David Dennis was proposed and voted as chief auditor of the General Conference. The wisdom of the nominating committee which voted Pastor Den-

nis' appointment by a two-to-one majority cannot be too highly praised. Had they stood by their initial decision, there were those who proposed to nominate Pastor Dennis from the floor. If such a move failed, the laity in North America and in other parts of the world would have risen up in protest and there would have been a further loss of tithes and offerings. The action of the nominating committee saved the North American Union presidents from further fiscal problems. It can only be hoped that they now perceive this fact.

Furthermore, this episode demonstrated the workings of a General Conference session at its very best. Criticism that delegates permit themselves to become rubber stamps for administrative decisions cannot be sustained in the face of this decision.

This re-election of Pastor Dennis also struck a very definite blow for religious liberty within the world church, an area in which there have been serious questions in recent years. This decision will make men cautious of using political ploys to enforce their desires, contrary to the wishes of the church. The duty of God's workers to stand up against improper procedures has been confirmed.

In light of this episode, the actions taken against God's servant in Australia, Pastor Austin Cooke, must be reviewed by the leadership of the South Pacific Division. If an auditor has an ethical obligation to reveal improprieties, how much greater is the obligation of a minister to cry aloud against apostasy and abuse of power?

Further to be noted in this chapter is the noble conduct of Barry Collins who, when made aware of the situation, eased the task of the nominating committee by withdrawing his own name from nomination. In so doing, he demonstrated a level of humility that each of us would do well to emulate.

Chapter 19

Devalued Compassion

We have known for decades that in a number of countries our church leaders were communist supporters. We have ever believed God's command to show respect to the government of the nation in which we reside. But men such as the president of our Romanian Union, reputed to be a card-carrying Communist, went far beyond this scriptural injunction. Yet, because it suited our purpose, we feted him at General Conference sessions and treated him as if he were a genuine Seventh-day Adventist leader. Some church leaders in Poland, Hungary, and the U.S.S.R. come under similar suspicion.

At the 1985 General Conference session in New Orleans, we noted several "side-shows." One of great interest and concern to us was a series of meetings conducted by a Seventh-day Adventist group called Christians in Crisis, with headquarters in Minnesota. We were touched by the testimony of Pastor Noble, a Cuban who spent over twenty years in jail simply because of his faith. Yet our church did not lift an official finger to assist this man who suffered great tortures and deprivation. It was left to an American who found himself in the same jail and recognized the sterling worth of Pastor Noble to plead with Jesse Jackson to do

something in his behalf. Jackson secured the release of Pastor Noble with other detainees just prior to the 1984 United States presidential election. We kept asking ourselves, "Why did we show such a callous disregard for this saintly man?"

But in truth our church's record in true religious liberty has often been abysmal. We uphold religious liberty as a principle, but we rarely take action to assist specific cases. And make no mistake, there is no such thing as a principle of religious liberty when the plights of individual men and women are ignored. It would be preferable in such circumstances to abandon the church department and cease the pretense.

In making this statement we are not advocating a social gospel, far from it. We do not support religions which see social change as their major ministry. Nevertheless, it is our Christian obligation, both as individuals and as a corporate body, to tend the needy. See Matthew 25.

As early as the period of the First World War, we ignored the persecution of the most loyal segment of our German church. These men loyally refused to bear arms and were imprisoned by the totalitarian regime of Kaiser Wilhelm. Not a few forfeited their lives rather than yield their conscience. Our German church did not lift a hand to assist these men.

Indeed, there were documented instances where church authorities stated that these men were in receipt of their just deserts for their refusal to "defend" the Fatherland. The German church officially had taken a combatant stand in the First World War.

The Conference of the Committee of the German Union takes the stand in regard to the bearing of arms

and to military duty that it is a civil demand to which the established governments of God are entitled according to 1 Corinthians 13:14 and Romans 13:3,5. *Zion Watchman*, March 20, 1916.

It seems that the German Union was unprepared to grant liberty of conscience to its members in this matter, lest it risk the ire of the German authorities.

What was even more disturbing was the revelation that, when General Conference leaders visited Germany after the war, they sided with the unfaithful, probably because they represented 98 percent of the German church. Pastor Conradi, the leader of the German church, who had encouraged the breach of the Bible stand against combatancy, was elevated to the post of field secretary of the General Conference, a post he later disgraced by rank apostasy. He was dismissed from denominational employment; later, he withdrew from church membership.

The recent events in Hungary demonstrate an appalling attitude toward faithful believers. When church leadership in Hungary capitulated to government pressure and joined the ill-named Council of Free Churches, those who could not in conscience tolerate this deplorable compromise were disfellowshipped en masse. This disfellowshipment by the Hungarian Union Conference was entirely contrary to church policy, which permits the individual church congregation alone the right to disfellowship believers.

Despite this blatant violation of church policy, a policy we demand that the laity obey, and despite the fact that the church in Hungary was seriously compromising our faith, leaders in Europe and the General Conference seemed impotent to do anything. Apparently any group of Seventh-day Adventists which exists as a majority in a country, and

which has the approval of the state, can gain the approval of church leadership, irrespective of almost any shameful conduct. That in recent years all our pastors in Hungary were trained in an ecumenical seminary can only have seriously weakened their ministries.

Although our Hungarian church left the Council of Free Churches when it was disbanded, and received back the faithful in 1989, these actions in no wise mitigate the serious wrongs of the past, which the Hungarian church has never properly confessed, and which the General Conference still has not publicly denounced. One can only conclude that, should it be again convenient for a national church to act in a similar manner, it could look forward to at least tacit support at the highest levels of our church.

Our utter lack of concern over the True and Free Seventh-day Adventist Church in the U.S.S.R. is another blot on our church's religious liberty record. In the U.S.S.R. we permitted the Communist authorities to dictate which of the four segments of our church was the one to be officially recognized. The one selected, while containing some very loyal believers, was nevertheless the one in which its leaders compromised principle to gain national favor.

The True and Free Seventh-day Adventists refused to compromise. Their leader, the great man, Pastor Shelkov, died in a Siberian prison camp at over 80 years of age, unheralded by our church leadership and without a word of support. Yet numerous men not of our faith upheld the virtue and nobility of this godly man. His great "sin" was his fidelity to the faith we also espouse, but which many of us disregard in times of difficulty. Our own pliability causes us to reject men of sterner mettle.

All too often we fawn over government leaders, ignoring their persecution of righteous men and women. Are we no

better than the Interconfessional Conference of Homage? Just four months prior to the execution of President Ceausescu of Romania, this organization sent a telegram to him, congratulating him as

the most beloved son of the Romanian nation, a hero among the heroes of our country, a brilliant founder of socialist Romania . . . a man whose mind and soul have realized the interest of the people. *Newsweek*, Jan. 29, 1990.

One can only surmise the current sentiments of these religious leaders for the memory of their fallen "hero."

While these men were flattering a cruel dictator, Seventh-day Adventists were in his jails receiving terrible punishments. One, Dorel Catarama, whose father and brother presented his case at the Christians in Crisis meeting in New Orleans in 1985, was unmercifully flogged every Sabbath as punishment for his refusal to violate the sanctity of the Sabbath. When the president of the Romanian Union was approached for his assistance in this case, he defended his government's cruel actions. Our General Conference Religious Liberty Department refused to take up the case and it was left to two United States senators to uphold this young man's cause. We ourselves sent personal protests, both to President Ceausescu and to the Romanian Ambassador to the United States.

Is it any surprise that

Romanian Adventists in both America and Romania are pushing for the resignation or dismissal of the president of the Romanian Union of Seventh-day Adventists and long-time supporter and apologist for the evil dictator Nicolae Ceausescu. Three weeks before Ceausescu's overthrow [the president of the Romanian

Union of Seventh-day Adventists] addressed the Romanian Communist Party Congress and said he endorsed Ceausescu's policies both foreign and domestic. *Christians in Crisis*, Jan-Feb 1990.

The same paper reported,

In 1985, he [the president of the Romanian Union] produced a book and a film touting religious liberty in Romania, a lie only the most gullible at the time believed and which no one believes any more. He denounced Dorel Catarama, whom we [Christians in Crisis] were trying to get released from prison, as a criminal and denied anyone in Romania was in prison for his religious convictions. He attempted to have an individual handing out invitations to our [Christians in Crisis] meeting arrested. Ibid.

Mistakenly, we have feared reprisals against our church and its members should we protest officially. All evidence suggests that the more vocal the protests, the greater the likelihood that governments will yield to pressure and cease their persecution. Silence achieves nothing.

Dr. Deone Hansen, his wife, and three other men, seeing the inactivity of our church in defense of our members under imprisonment and torture, attempted to arouse the conscience of our people by standing outside the New Orleans Superdome during the 1985 General Conference session and peacefully distributing literature. All five were arrested and the four men roughly handcuffed. They were thrown into a dreadful cell with a little prostitute, behind two sets of bars. Dr. Hansen was deprived of the belt for his trousers and had to manually hold them up. We and three others were forced to locate bail money in order to obtain the release of these sincere people. While the North American Division embla-

zoned the cliché “The Caring Church” across its display, not a single church leader of that Division evinced the slightest concern for this act of rough justice which, ironically, occurred on July 4, 1985. Later, all five accused were acquitted when no one appeared in court to press charges.

Where, we may all inquire, is the true compassion of our church?

Chapter 20

Devalued Literature

The time is long overdue when we must lodge strong protests against the continual misuse of our publications to promote error. God never designed such a purpose for our presses.

Let not the institutions ordained by God to send out life-giving truth be made an agency for the dissemination of soul-destroying error. *Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 7, 168.

Indeed, Sister White admonished typesetters to refuse to set such error upon our presses, irrespective of the wish of administrators.

As you love and fear God, refuse to have anything to do with the knowledge against which God warned Adam. Let typesetters refuse to set a sentence of such matter. Let proofreaders refuse to read, pressmen to print, and binders to bind it. . . . Those in charge of the institution may urge that you are not responsible, that the managers must arrange these matters. But you are responsible — responsible for the use of your eyes, your hands, your mind. These are entrusted to you by God to be used for Him, not for the service of Satan. Ibid.

How our publishing houses today need to be rededicated to publishing only truth, only the pure everlasting gospel!

How they need faithful typesetters, printers, proofreaders and binders, as well as authors and editors, all dedicated to giving the three angels' messages!

In view of the gathering apostasy in Australia, it should not surprise us that the publication of error is rampant there. Under the guise of "Viewpoint," materials totally contrary to Scripture find their outlet, to destroy the minds of unthinking "believers." It is not good enough for the *South Pacific Record* to carry the disclaimer,

"VIEWPOINT articles allow readers to express their opinions on various topics. Viewpoints expressed are not necessarily those of the editors or the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We welcome your reaction."

There is a place for the expression of various points of view where clear truths of Scripture are not violated. But to use such an avenue to present materials which defy God's Word is a total travesty. One such article, *Sign or Signs* (*South Pacific Record*, May 13, 1989), stated the utter nonsense that the only sign of Jesus' coming is Christ's coming itself. No wonder Brother Raglan Marks, an elderly layman, was constrained to write,

Wake up, Mr. Editor, and give us God's message for this hour. *Ibid.*, June 10, 1989.

As Pastor Ron Taylor, former secretary of the Australasian (now South Pacific) Division pointed out in the same issue, Sister White stated,

Prophecy not only foretells the manner and object of Christ's coming, but presents tokens by which men are to know when it is near. *The Great Controversy*, 304.

We note that the word *tokens* is in the plural. Jesus Himself states, "There shall be signs" Luke 21:25, and then goes on to list many.

Such an article as *Sign or Signs* is perfectly devised to remove the imminence of Christ's coming from the minds of our people and to leave us in utter darkness. Each reader should read 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6 for himself, in order to sense just what an article such as this, which is specifically designed to contradict plain Scripture, does to our people. The production of confusion would be the least deleterious effect. And then we wonder why our young people lack faith in our message. We are deliberately destabilizing their faith.

We take away the faith of the young and then we wail that we are losing the vast majority. The very people who have had such a prominent role in taking away the certainty of God's faith from His children then set themselves up to speculate upon the cause of this loss of faith. Naturally such people possess absolutely no insight into their own responsibility, shifting the blame elsewhere.

In a single edition of the *South Pacific Record* (October 28, 1989) a trilogy of articles appeared. Each attempted an explanation of the tragic loss of our young people from God's church. Each failed in the most decided way to achieve its aim. Indeed the printing of these articles was a wicked waste of God's means and time. Yet the editor claimed that

the responses [to the articles] have been overwhelmingly favourable — about five to one. *Ibid.*, December 2, 1989.

One can only weep for our church in Australia, accepting this report to be true.

In his editorial, one of the associate editors rejected the view that the acceptance of Dr. Ford's teachings was the

reason for the loss of most of the young people. Indeed, the writer suggested that the social changes of the 1960s, where young people "challenged authority, questioned the existing power structures, and searched for 'self-fulfillment' " were the cause, and "it appeared that Dr. Ford was offering a way to achieve those aims."

Now it so happens that we were young people in the 1960s being only 26 years of age when that decade commenced. The author was absolutely wrong. It was not sociological change which destroyed the faith of our young people but the very doctrines of doubt Dr. Ford published. Who would have faith in God's Word if it were only accurate for salvation but contained "millions of errors" in matters related to science, history, genealogies, and other areas? (Dr. Ford, February 4, 1976 recorded upon tape — tapes held in the office of the South Pacific Division.) Who would trust the Spirit of Prophecy if it suffered from the same weaknesses as Dr. Ford asserted?

How well Russell recalls that great old octogenarian, Pastor J.W.Kent, rising up before Dr. Ford at the never-to-be forgotten meeting of the Australasian Division Biblical Research Institute on February 3, 1976, and declaring as he held his Bible aloft, "I'd die for the certainties of this book, but I wouldn't shed a corpuscle of my blood for all the ifs, buts, and maybes you've given us today!" (Meeting of the Australasian Division BRI held Feb. 3,4, 1976.) And neither would our youth. Indeed they would not even bother to attend a church which did not know the true meaning of Scripture. Our youth voted against such uncertainty with their feet! And yet this associate editor of the *South Pacific Record*, imagining what it was like in those days, thought he had the answer. How wrong can an editor be?

The great catastrophe is that while men like the above writer parade such pathetic analyses in our literature, the real cause will never be addressed, and Avondale College will continue its teaching of "ifs, buts, and maybes." To that author, Ford's appalling errors on such central doctrines as the 2300-day prophecy are almost irrelevant to the mass defection from our faith.

Yet a second writer, a former pastor, also sought to explain all, through examining the counter-culture which upheld "acceptance, love, tolerance, freedom." He did not appear to perceive these as the devil's counterfeits of the genuine qualities, which God alone imparts. He saw the older generation worshiping God in

awe, reverence and "the fear of the Lord" [while younger people worshipped Him] . . . as a Friend congenial toward egalitarianism.

Thus, according to the second author,

It isn't difficult to understand Dr. Desmond Ford's popularity with young people. Some charged that he had an almost hypnotic influence and satanic control over them. The gospel he preached, and his willingness to oppose tradition, made him seem to them to be more in tune with the vital concerns of the day.

This second author was himself one of these young people. He does not seem to perceive that the reason that he is no longer a pastor of our church is that he was callously served up damnable error by Dr. Ford in his college classes, under the guise of Bible truth. It was not tradition that Dr. Ford opposed; it was the precious Word of God. Sister White truly states that "minds will be hypnotized." The *Record* article writer's mind was one of these. It is not his fault, but the responsibility of a church leadership which took no

action to stay the spread of heresy in Dr. Ford's classes, despite the most earnest warnings from senior pastors — those noble Concerned Brethren.

How any young person could take serious notice of a man like Dr. Ford, who proclaimed loud and long that he was NOT opposing Seventh-day Adventist "tradition," but simply expounding it, we do not know. For on October 27, 1979, in his Forum address at Pacific Union College, Ford revealed for the first time that he had not believed our sanctuary message for thirty years. Yet all those years he posed as a sound proponent of that message, while snidely he had destroyed it behind closed doors in his classroom. By his own confession Dr. Ford is a deceiver.

The editor of the South Pacific *Record* used his *Viewpoint* article to echo an almost identical theme.

Then Dr. Desmond Ford appeared on the scene in Australia and New Zealand (and with less impact in North America and Northern Europe). Dr. Ford had great intellect, was articulate and innovative, and followed an impressive lifestyle regime. And for many of the 60s generation, the highly-educated and the free-thinkers, he was a ray of hope. These people were not necessarily in agreement with his theology — although many were. Nor did they necessarily understand the ramifications of the theological issues in question — though many did. In the main, I'd suggest, they rallied around Dr. Ford hoping for a satisfying alternative to what their church life had been. And if it was a choice between Dr. Ford's charisma and what they viewed as deadly dull activities in their church each week, Dr. Ford would get their vote.

This piece of prose was simply a travesty of history. As members of the "60s generation" we refute it entirely. The

editor was simply re-writing history to accord with his false theory. He must have been unaware that it was church leadership and NOT young people who foisted Ford upon God's people. It was church leadership which sent him to numerous camp meetings as the star attraction. It was church leadership which sent him to subtly pervert the minds of ministers at workers' meetings. It was church leadership which voted Dr. Ford as chairman of the Theology Department at Avondale College. It was church leadership which condoned his articles in every edition of the *Australasian Signs of the Times*. It was church leadership which encouraged his frequent articles in the *Australasian Record*. In short, Dr. Ford's prominence and popularity were promoted by the older generation and most decidedly NOT by the "60s generation."

/ It is difficult to understand how the editor could have his facts so twisted. The young people were simply trusting, not Dr. Ford, but the church leadership. They reasoned that such leaders would not promote someone in error. Thus they imbibed the Fordian theology of doubt, became doubters themselves, and finally yielded to those doubts by leaving God's church.

This concerted effort to restore the role of Dr. Ford in our church is a most disturbing trend. The three authors quoted above at no time expressed concern over the spiritual holocaust generated by Dr. Ford, which has led thousands of our people down the path of eternal damnation. It would seem that this is a matter of little import to them. Few matters would bring us greater joy than to see our old college mate, Desmond Ford, return to the faith. But we cannot sit silent and see him elevated in his fallen state, as if he were some savior of our church.

A similar trend is developing in the United States. This was evidenced by the publication in the *Pacific Union Recorder* of an advertisement for Dr. Ford's proposed meeting in Glendale Church on January 27, 1990, on the topic of Bible prophecy and modern times.

The Los Angeles chapter of the Association of Adventist Forums will present Desmond Ford on Sabbath, January 27, at 3:30 p.m. in the Glendale City Church chapel. Ford will address the topic of "Christian Faith and Prophetic Interpretation in the 20th century." *Pacific Union Recorder*, January 1, 1990.

Since Ford was defrocked for faulty prophetic interpretation, this meeting can simply be described as the presentation of soul-destroying error before our people. Indeed Dr. Ford's understanding of prophecy has greatly deteriorated since 1980. It is likely that Glendale Church would reject a presentation of present truth in their church, but obviously do not reject specious error. If the present trend continues, an unrepentant Desmond Ford will be reinstated in our church with the prestige he formerly held and with damage to the church which will exceed anything in the past.

We even incite our young people to believe error. In 1985, our South Queensland young people were informed,

In this passage [Luke 1:26-38] we are face to face with one of the great controversial doctrines of the Christian faith — the Virgin Birth. The church does not insist that we believe in this doctrine. Let us look at the reasons for and against believing in it and then we can make our own decision. *The South Queensland Youth Magazine*, Christmas Edition 1985.

Following the printing of this article, the editor, who was the Conference youth leader, was transferred to Avondale

College faculty where undoubtedly he would continue to plant seeds of doubt in the minds of even more young people. *Anchor*, No. 5, February 1986.

Agnosticism has even surfaced in our church paper prepared for non-Adventists, *Signs*. The little church of Euroa in Victoria sacrificed to order 500 copies of the August 1989 edition of the South Pacific *Signs*, proposing to distribute them in the community. After reading the contents, they recognized that they had wasted their hard-earned cash. The offending article, authored by a physician, stated,

While I don't *know* whether God exists, I've chosen to believe that He does, and that He cares for me. If I'm wrong in this belief, then I will have lived my life with an illusion. The idea of living with such an illusion is less disturbing to me, however, than the idea of living without it.

Could anyone be attracted to our faith by such an expression of uncertainty about the very existence of our God?

For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Hebrews 11:6.

Just before the 1985 General Conference Session, the late Pastor Robert Pierson, president of the General Conference from 1966 to 1979, invited Pastor George Burnside and the authors home to lunch in his home in Hendersonville, North Carolina. During our conversation, he posed a leading question, "What do you think of the *Adventist Review* these days?" Each of us expressed our disappointment with its editorial policy. Pastor Pierson quietly said, "They were good days when Elder Wood was in charge, weren't they?" Then he expressed deep concern for the inclusion of a num-

ber of articles, one of which was on the subject of abortion. It had presented a worldly view of the subject.

Surely our literature is severely devalued by the publication of such articles.

Many delegates to the 1990 General Conference session were concerned when a group known as Adventist Layworkers Affiliate of Tennessee mailed a pamphlet entitled *United States in Prophecy* to every home in Indianapolis. Apparently this outreach caused serious embarrassment to the church leadership. Perhaps the fact that a number of church leaders of other Christian denominations were guests of the General Conference at the session exacerbated their discomfiture. Greetings were spoken from the podium by a priest of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church (Peter Leonid), a priest of the Roman Catholic Church (Thomas Murphy), a minister of the Disciples of Christ Church, representing the World Council of Churches (Joan Campbell), and others.

In reality, the material in *United States in Prophecy* was a careful presentation of the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of end-time events. Thus it was a shock to learn that the communications director of the General Conference had described the publication as "trash." *The Indianapolis Star*, July 13, 1990. Other comments attributed to the same official included,

We need to apologize to the city . . . [and] . . . This kind of thing puts us on the level of a cult, which we are not. Ibid.

The following day, the same newspaper reported that another member of the General Conference Communications Department stated,

They (the dissidents) want us to be like we were 100 years ago . . . these people are a thorn in the flesh, but the church tolerates them. *The Indianapolis Star*, July 14, 1990.

It was also asserted that only 1,000 of the church's 750,000 members in North America "want to cling to the church's historic anti-Catholic beliefs." Ibid.

God's people deserve an explanation of such statements made at high level. So closely are some Seventh-day Adventists moving toward apostate religions that we are becoming ashamed of our Bible-based beliefs. If we continue this path, the book *The Great Controversy* will become an embarrassment to the church, and those supporting its worldwide distribution will be regarded as offshoots. These are messages designed to call God's children out of Babylon. Let us distribute them far and wide.

To the amazement of many, at the same General Conference session, the current *Ministry* magazine was distributed. The cover of this magazine was a diabolical painting in which more than thirty symbols of New Age, paganism and Catholicism have been readily identified.

Now as never before should the mighty message of Revelation be spread with great vigor throughout the world. The printed page should be scattered to the ends of the earth; it must be the keystone of our global strategy.

Chapter 21

Devalued Mission

The mighty commission of the fourth angel of Revelation 18 has almost been lost in the hearts of many members. The message is heard only seldom from our pulpits. Many ignore the fact that it is the final message of love from our great coming King, calling His people out of Babylon and warning the world of the consequences of remaining among apostate religions. It is this message which God has specifically called us to give just prior to His coming.

The reasons which cause us to be disobedient to our divine commission are not difficult to isolate. Today, many of us preach messages indistinguishable from those preached the following day in the fallen churches of Christendom. Such preaching dulls the spiritual senses. If our messages are the same as those presented by the Presbyterians, the Methodists, the Anglicans, the Catholics, and the Baptists, we might as well join them in *their* missions. The preachers in these apostate churches cease to fill our hearts with alarm and many sense no need to bring to their congregations the last message from God. The cry rises, "Why don't we simply take our message to the atheists and the heathen, and leave fellow Christians in their own churches?" Why? Because our God has commanded that we cry aloud,

Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Revelation 18:4,5.

Many Seventh-day Adventists appear to have forgotten that among these fallen churches is to be found every evil of devilish devising, from approval of homosexual marriages, abortion on demand, infant baptism, Sabbath desecration, denial of Christ's virgin birth and His resurrection, the Mass, confession to sinful men, worship of idols, penance, and the proclamation of the hellish doctrine of the immortality of the soul, to glossolalia, church-promoted gambling, permissive use of alcohol, tobacco, and other body-defiling substances, and rank denial of the existence of God Himself. Is it the least wonder that a loving God must call out His people still found among such spiritual pollution?

Today from our pulpits should be echoing unique messages, messages that could never be proclaimed from the desks of these fallen churches. But all too often our ministers prepare innocent little homilies, which neither feed the soul nor produce spiritual arousal among God's flock. So lacking in inspiration have many of our services become, that some of our members even attend Sunday services among the fallen churches in order to be "spiritually fed." But in such a quest they are doomed to failure, for it is the distinctive messages of our church which alone will raise men to a deeper love for their Saviour and stir them to action. It is such messages alone which will draw men and women out of the perils of these apostate churches. To preach messages which are not indicative of our uniqueness is to devalue our mission. We must have faith in our God, recognizing that He has designed a message which best meets the need of this, the most cataclysmic period in earth's history.

The trend toward ecumenism is widespread in our midst. Indeed, so worldly-minded have most Seventh-day Adventists become, that they are prepared to adopt virtually any standard of society. Forty years ago, when the social standards in most countries were vastly higher than they are today, our church held standards far higher. Today when the standards of society are at an alarming ebb, those within the church are little different.

This attitude has naturally led us to emulate the standards and doctrines of the fallen churches of Protestantism. Such trends were first given strong leadership support in 1956, when the General Conference entered into far-reaching discussions with the Evangelicals. Courting the praise of these apostates, we conceded crucial doctrinal ground, opening the way for the distressing decline of faith in our midst, and the divisions we see worldwide.

Inevitably, it is the faithful who bear the brunt of ecclesiastical ire related to the evident schism within our midst. Such attacks on God's humble flock are entirely misplaced. The fault lies almost exclusively with those at the highest level of our church, who sought to alter our faith in line with Evangelical Protestantism. (See Standish, R.R. and Standish, C.D., *Adventism Challenged*, vols. A&B, Hartland Publications, P O Box 1, Rapidan, VA 22733 USA for a more detailed account.)

Following the example of these leaders, pastors and laity have increasingly cast their eyes toward these apostate churches and sought to emulate their concepts, standards and methods. Thus, when many of these folk found no barrier to the ordination of women as elders, we followed. When many were "sympathetic" to mothers with unwanted pregnancies, we too accepted abortion on demand. When many apostate

Protestants felt that we should be more understanding to homosexuals, assuring them of their salvation while they practice their sins, many Seventh-day Adventists concurred. When many apostates in the Christian world felt that the guilty party in a divorce still had the right to church membership even after re-marriage, and that it was no bar to the ministry of men, many of us agreed. When these churches endorsed the charismatic form of worship, many Adventists also espoused it.

We have become slaves to fashion, not fashion in dress (although we could write on that topic too with veracity) but the fashion of the apostates of Christendom. It is not too exaggerated a forecast to suggest that, as the practice of marrying homosexual couples in apostate churches gathers momentum, the slaves to ecclesiastical fashion in our midst will urge our church to follow suit.

Surely today, as God views His church He cries out,

Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me? For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God. How canst thou say, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim? Jeremiah 2:21-23.

In this atmosphere we are fast becoming followers of other Christians, and despite their faulted faiths, there can be no surprise that we are rapidly losing our mission to those of other faiths. If they are our example and our source of motivation, it would be entirely unreasonable to attempt to influence them to join a church bankrupt of ideas, devoid of a faith based upon the certainty of God's Word, and without direction.

But, fellow believers, we do have a sure faith. We have not followed cunningly devised fables. We should be exploding with evangelistic ideas and vigor. We do have an invariant direction, a divinely established mission. Why are we then casting out the precious grains and seeking worthless husks?

The time is well overdue that we purge ourselves of the perilous ecumenical spirit which is growing with marked acceleration in our midst; that we cease to look to apostate churches as a norm, and that we return to the infallible guidance given to His church by our God.

It is time we withdraw from participation in ministers' fraternals. God has called us to work *for* the ministry of other faiths but never *with* them. Such associations frequently serve to intimidate our pastors from preaching the straight testimonies in public evangelism, lest they be berated by their colleagues in the fraternal. How can a pastor cry "Come out of her" when he is part of the organization?

The road taken by those who join ministers' fraternals is well illustrated by the fact that Seventh-day Adventist pastors are prepared to join with ministers of apostate Protestant and Roman Catholic faiths in order to pray for Christian unity, despite the fact that the aim of such prayers is union with Rome. It was reported that

Seven Christian traditions united at St. Kieran's Catholic Church, Brighton [Brisbane, Australia] for an ecumenical liturgy to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. *The Catholic Leader*, June 17, 1990.

An accompanying photograph showed those in attendance: three Roman Catholic priests, an Anglican priest, a Uniting Church pastor, a Salvation Army captain, and a Seventh-day Adventist minister.

The pernicious influence of ministerial fraternals was revealed by a young ministerial assistant. After receiving the name of an interested lady, the pastor had read in the local Baptist church paper that she had become a member of that church. In order not to jeopardize his good relations with the Baptist minister, the pastor decided that he would not visit this lady, suggesting that the assistant might want to do so.

Is it the march toward these ecumenical fraternals that has led to the beginning of the call to "work for the unchurched"? We think so. Many may not yet have realized that such a call is a most devious way of reducing and finally eliminating our central thrust to call men and women out of Roman Catholicism and the fallen churches of Protestantism. There is a great work for the atheists, agnostics, pagans, and the unchurched, but not at the expense of the members in churches of Christendom.

It is time for us to withdraw from all aspects of the World Council of Churches. We know of a surety that this organization has absolutely no mandate from God. What business, then, have Seventh-day Adventists sitting upon their committees and even wasting their time attending the general meetings as observers? Such meetings are subtly diverting us from our vital mission.

Such activities no doubt served as an encouragement to the leaders of our church in Hungary to join the politically expedient Council of Free Churches, a subsidiary of the World Council of Churches. Indeed, the president of our Hungarian Union even accepted leadership in this organization. This act resulted in two serious consequences. The first was that every official Seventh-day Adventist pastor was destined to be trained in the evangelical seminary. One can

scarcely imagine that such men were equipped to preach the message of Revelation 18.

The second consequence was that hundreds of faithful members and pastors who protested this significant union with apostate churches were summarily expelled from the Hungarian Seventh-day Adventist church by the guilty parties, the leaders of the Hungarian Union of Seventh-day Adventists. Further, the leaders of the church had violated church policy, which forbids any organization except the local church body from disfellowshipping a church member.

Disturbing as this fact was, even more alarming is the indisputable fact that neither Division nor General Conference, when made aware of the facts of the case, took appropriate action. Many discussions were held, but it was always the group of faithful believers who were placed in the adversarial role. They were cited as the ones who had caused the division, and the disgraceful actions of the Hungarian Union leadership were presented in the light of a minor departure from propriety.

In the summer of 1989 Colin with his assistant Hal Mayer visited the disfellowshipped brethren and sisters in Hungary. They sensed a genuine desire by the brethren and sisters to be reunited with the Hungarian Union and the worldwide church. Intense dialog took place, and it was agreed to ask the General Conference to intervene with this objective in mind. Colin wrote a draft letter to the leadership of the General Conference requesting meetings to explore reunification. There was much hope and joy. The meetings with General Conference, Trans-European, and Hungarian Union leaders appeared to go well, but a golden opportunity was lost when it became increasingly clear that unity could

not be forged on the true principles of truth and righteousness.¹

We do not write to present a diatribe upon dedicated and godly members of the fallen churches of Babylon. Quite the contrary, for we crave so much for their salvation that we wish them to hear the last great message of salvation. Those who would imperil the souls of these good folk by emulating

¹ It seems that our fears have been fully realized.

In sorrow the Small Committee of the unofficial Seventh-day Adventist Church in Hungary has had to recognize that unity with the Union Conference is not possible; at least while the president of the Hungarian Union appears to place more importance on unity with Babylon than unity with Seventh-day Adventist brethren whose principles are a rebuke to his affiliations.

Having withdrawn from the Council of Free Churches for reasons of expedience rather than repentance, the Hungarian Union is supporting a new weekly paper *Harang* (Bell) of which the president of the Hungarian Union is a member of the editorial committee. It is understood that the Union purchased a share to the value of [Florints] 500.000 in the Limited Company that publishes *Harang*.

The journal is an ecumenical initiative of Catholics, Calvinists, Lutherans, Israelitish, and Adventists—all "Bible-based churches" according to editor-in-chief, Tibor Petho. He says they rely on the document of the Papal Council for Publicity titled "Criteria for the ecumenical and inter-religion cooperation in the field of publicity" which also warns against "intrusive evangelism and bigotry." (A nice way of saying, "Keep your distinctive doctrines to yourselves.")

The Small Committee hastens to point out that unity of Catholic and Protestant is the aim when there is a predominance of Catholic ideas and guidance.

Harang publishes positive articles on the re-establishment of diplomatic connections between the Vatican and Hungary. Of a highly political character, it fosters unity of state and religion. Those who know the Adventist Church only from this magazine will have no doubt that the Adventist Church is perfectly in harmony with Catholic/Protestant aims for a new, peaceful, and religious world. A hundred years ago, E. G. White foresaw this type of work when she

their errors and depriving them of a full knowledge of the everlasting gospel demonstrate a terrible disregard of their eternal destinies.

The decade of the nineties is surely no time to devalue our mission. Rather it is a momentous time in which to shoulder the wonderful commission entrusted to us by our Lord. God give each of us the grace, wisdom and willingness to do His work.

said: "Papists, Protestants, and worldlings will alike accept the form of godliness without the power, and they will see in this union a great movement for the conversion of the world and the ushering in of the long-expected millennium." *The Great Controversy*, 588-589.

The *Harang* involvement by the Hungarian Union is a slap in the face to unity, and nullifies any progress made at the meeting on September 13, 1989. The Small Committee stands firm that there can be no unity on apostasy by ecumenism that only silences the distinctive voice of Adventism. *Anchor*, April 1990.

Chapter 22

Papal Practices

The message to pronounce the Seventh-day Adventist Church Babylon, and call the people of God out of her, does not come from any heavenly messenger, or any human agent inspired by the Spirit of God. *Selected Messages*, Book 2, 66.

The Lord hath not spoken by any messenger who calls the church that keeps the commandments of God Babylon. True, there are tares with the wheat; but Christ said that He would send His angels to first gather the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into the garner. I know that the Lord loves His church. It is not to be disorganized or broken up into independent atoms. *Ibid.*, 68.

Those who assert that the Seventh-day Adventist churches constitute Babylon, or any part of Babylon, might better stay at home. *Testimonies to Ministers*, 36,37.

For any man to call the attention of the world and other churches to this church [the Seventh-day Adventist Church], denouncing her as Babylon, is to do a work in harmony with him who is the accuser of the brethren. *Ibid.*, 50.

My brother, I learn that you are taking the position that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is Babylon, and

that all that would be saved must come out of her. You are not the only man the devil has deceived in this matter. . . . My brother you are certainly off the track. Ibid., 58,59.

So clear are these testimonies from the pen of inspiration, one doubts that anyone could misjudge the issue. Yet today, many church members, seeing the ills of the church, are ignoring God's counsels and repeating the devil's slander that God's church is Babylon. This we deplore. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is precious to us. The fellowship of God's children is ever joyous. We certainly are glad to be part of the family of God, part of its membership, part of its ministry.

Yet we would be blind if we did not see some among who are seeding papal practices into God's church. When God's people discern such practices within Catholicism, they often rise up with righteous indignation against the abuse of truth and standards. But when the very same practices are foisted upon God's church, some do not express the same consternation. It is only reasonable to anticipate that what Satan found to be such a successful tool in the early Christian church, he will attempt to utilize within God's remnant church. In this strategy he will not ultimately succeed, but sad to say, thousands, perhaps millions, of church members will be deluded and thus prepare themselves to serve the Papacy and sever their connection with God's church.

This matter is always a sensitive one to discuss and we do so with no little trepidation. But the growing danger of the introduction of papal methods into our church and its undermining of the faith and witness of our church impels us to set forth a warning. We do not propose to make specific charges,

Rather, we will detail some Roman Catholic methods and permit the reader to analyze whether some or any of these have entered *his* church.

In order to be fair to the Roman Catholic Church, we have chosen as our source an author who was a Jesuit priest, a graduate of the Gregorian University of Rome, previously professor of Metaphysics and Ethics at the Westminster Seminary, the Catholic Training College of England, and dean of Theology at Corpus Christi College, England. He left the priesthood in order to marry, but remains a staunch Roman Catholic. Nevertheless, he does not cover the Roman Catholic Church's weaknesses. In his book *Vicars of Christ*¹, Peter de Rosa provides intimate details of the various forms of papal methodology. We reproduce eighteen methods pointed out in his book and invite the reader to examine whether any of these faulty methods have crept into our church. If they have, there is surely a need to make every effort to rectify them in order to maintain the purity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

1. Objecting to constructive criticism.

In [Pope] Innocent's view, it was more wicked for Albigensians to call him the Antichrist than for him to prove it by burning them, men, women and children in their thousands. Peter de Rosa, *Vicars of Christ*, 225.

In ancient Israel, the dissenters were never priests but prophets. And, while being an annoying bunch, they were often *right* when the priests were wrong. Jesus was in the line not of priests but of prophets; hence he was looked on as a dissenter. He was crucified for dissent. . . . We, too, need our Micah, our

¹ Published by Corgi Books, 61-63 Uxbridge Road., Ealing, London W5 5SA. Year of publication 1989.

Amos, our Jeremiah, our Jesus. To silence free speech is to silence the voice of prophecy which is the voice of God. Ibid., 611,612.

2. Condemnation of those condemning evil in the Church.

In spite of curial efforts to scupper it, a Council met in Basle in 1432. The bishops showed they were in earnest. [The Council of Basle suggested that], from now on, all ecclesiastical appointments shall be made according to the canons of the Church; all simony² shall cease. From now on all priests, from the highest to the lowest rank, shall put away their concubines, and whoever within two months of this decree neglects its demands shall be deprived of his office, though he be the Bishop of Rome. From now on, the ecclesiastical administration of each country shall cease to depend upon Papal caprice. . . . The abuse of ban and anathema by Popes shall cease. . . . from now on the Roman Curia, that is, the Popes shall neither demand or receive any fees for ecclesiastical offices. From now on, a Pope should think not of the world's treasures but only of those of the world to come.

This was strong meat. Too strong. The ruling Pope, Eugene IV, summoned his own Council at Florence. Basle he labelled "a beggarly mob, mere vulgar fellows from the lowest dregs of the clergy, apostates, blaspheming rebels, men guilty of sacrilege, gaolbirds [jail birds], men who without exception deserve only to be hunted back to the devil whence they came." Ibid., 138.

3. The laity are given little say in the Church.

[In the United States,] a Catholic rejoices in openness, complete freedom of worship, democracy. He takes it for granted that freedom leads to a deepening

² The sale of clerical position in the Church.

of the truth. He is used to his leaders having to present themselves for his approval. He can vote them in, he can vote them out. He demands press conferences, freedom of information, an unfettered press that is like a second government. In the church, a Catholic has to put up with total secrecy and lack of accountability. There are no choices. . . . He has to accept what he is given. In the church, there are no press conferences, no checks and balances, no explanations. The control from the top is absolute. The impression given is that freedom and discussion lead to the dilution of truth. Ibid., 209.

4. Failure to speak in defense of the innocent.

[Before, during, and after World War II,] throughout Italy and the Reich, Jews were being systematically victimized and, in many well known cases, killed. Not one unequivocal word of condemnation issued from the Vatican. This silence, many say, was worse than any heresy. . . . Rome's lips were firmly and, it turned out, permanently sealed. Ibid., 274³

5. Theologians' use of devious means to hide their apostate teachings.

Catholic Bible scholars scuttled for cover like startled crabs. They lived in dread of being reported to Rome by their students or fellow-professors. Haunted by the fear of excommunication for one false step, they could at best report the enlightened researches of their Protestant brethren with affected disapproval. . . . Only thus could they survive hoping for better days. Ibid., 367.

³ For more information on this topic, see *The Vatican's Holocaust* by Avro Manhattan, published by Ozark Books, 1986, Box 3703, MO 65808, USA.

6. Noble men persecuted.

Huss, brave, chaste, incorruptible, stern opponent of simony and clerical concubinage, met a harsher fate. Forbidden counsel, tried on a trumped-up charge, interrogated by Dominicans, who had not read his books even in translation, he was sentenced to death. . . . It was clearly more sinful to say, as did Huss and the New Testament, that after the blessing the Eucharist should still be called "bread", than to be a greedy, murderous, incestuous Pope who misled the church on almost everything. Ibid., 132, 133.

This latter reference is to Pope John XXIII (no connection with the twentieth century Pope of the same name) who, the same year as Huss was martyred, was deposed after his conviction on five charges. De Rosa quotes Gibbon's record concerning the fact that the number of charges against Pope John XXIII was reduced from fifty-four to five. Gibbon commented,

The most scandalous charges [against Pope John XXIII] were suppressed; the Vicar of Christ was only charged with piracy, murder, rape, sodomy and incest. Ibid., 132.

One's imagination is severely stretched to picture what the more scandalous charges may have been. For these "lesser" crimes, the Pope received a jail sentence of three years.

7. Church leaders with greater interest in power and material matters than in religion.

It is significant that John XXIII was absolved from heresy, probably because he had never evinced sufficient interest in religion to be counted as heterodox. Ibid., 132.

8. Belief that church leaders are above lay judgement.

[In his *Dictatus* Pope Gregory VII (1073-84) listed 27 powers invested in the Pope. One of these was that] the Pope can be judged by no one on earth. Ibid., 80.

This claim, of course, declared papal infallibility, many centuries before it was accepted as a full dogma of the church. As a matter of interest, we may well ask if Pope Adrian VI was infallible when he stated in 1523,

If by the Roman church you mean its head or pontiff, it is without question that he can err even in matters touching the faith. He does this when he teaches heresy by his own judgment or decretal. In truth, many Roman pontiffs were heretics. The last of them was Pope John XXII. Ibid., 285.

9. Church leaders' decisions must be respected and supported even when manifestly wrong.

In his seventeenth century book, *Romano Pontifice*, Cardinal Bellarmine stated, "If the Pope were to err by imposing sins and forbidding virtues, the church would still have to consider sins as good and virtues as vices, or else she would sin against conscience." Ibid., 71.

10. In church trials guilt is predetermined and all efforts made to ensure a verdict of guilty.

In the *Libro Nero* (Black Book) on display in the Vatican for the guidance of inquisitors as late as the end of the nineteenth century it was stated, "Either the person confesses and he is proved guilty by his own confession, or he does not confess and is equally guilty on the evidence of witnesses. If a person confesses the whole of what he is accused of, he is unquestionably guilty of the whole; but if he confesses only a part, he ought still to be regarded as guilty of the whole, since what he has confessed proves him to be capable of

guilt as to the other points of the accusations. . . . If, notwithstanding all the means employed, the unfortunate wretch still denies his guilt, he is to be considered as a victim of the devil: and, as such, deserves no compassion from the servants of God, nor the pity and indulgence of the Holy Mother Church: he is a son of perdition. Let him perish among the damned." Ibid., 230.

[From the moment of arrest, the victim] had no hope. . . . Alone and friendless, he was refused legal representation. . . . Defence witnesses were not allowed. All prosecution witnesses--their identities were kept secret from the prisoner--were given equal status. Among them might be the accuser's servants whom he had dismissed for theft or incompetence or others of ill-repute or unreliable testimony. Ibid., 231.

11. Emphasis upon upholding the system rather than the faith.

It is clear from this that the aim of the Inquisition was to defend not the faith but the Papal system. Ibid., 232.

12. Cowardly silence from clergy in the face of ecclesiastical evil.

In 1870, when Pope Pius IX introduced the dogma of Papal infallibility to the Vatican I Council, 140 bishops absented themselves in cowardly neutrality.

At least two-thirds of the American bishops, led by Kenrick of St. Louis, were opposed to the definition of Papal infallibility. Ibid., 185.

Yet all except Bishop Riccio of Cajazzo and Bishop Fitzgerald of Little Rock absented themselves from the vote.

13. Acceptance of known error as truth for political expediency.

[At the Vatican I Council, only two bishops remained to courageously vote against the measure which they full well knew to be wrong--the Bishop of Cajazzo, Italy, and the Bishop of Little Rock, Arkansas. However, under enormous pressure from their colleagues,] those two brave bishops, who, a moment ago, denied it, now confessed on their knees to Pius IX--"Modo credo, Sancte Pater"--that they believed it as sincerely and unreservedly as they believed in God's and Jesus' divinity. Theirs was the quickest conversion in history. Ibid., 187.

It is hard to escape this conclusion: bishops are too frightened of the Pope to say what they really believe is best for the church. Ibid., p. 201.

14. Failure to recognize that reform-minded believers will, under God's blessing, save the church.

The Reformation came not when the church deteriorated further but when real holiness appeared. The Reformers saved the Papacy which had sunk too low to save either itself or the church. Ibid., 167.

15. Entry of fiscal dishonesty and immorality into the church.

In Rome, meanwhile, the coffers were empty; everyone from Popes to the lowliest doorman was a simoniac [had paid for his position]; every cleric had one mistress at least; and the churches were falling down. Ibid., 75.

16. Use of disfellowshipment to rid church of those regarded as an embarrassment to leadership.

On a quite ordinary day . . . John XXII excommunicated one patriarch, five archbishops, thirty bishops and forty-six abbots. Ibid., 165.

17. Obedience to church leadership is obedience to God.

[Pope] Clement [XI's] view was that there is no higher duty than obedience to the Pope. Obey him and there can be no question of condemnation from God. Ibid., 325.

18. Theological acceptance of the devilish doctrine of original sin.

[Accepting the blatant error of Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, in which he proposed the doctrine of original sin, Pope Gregory the Great] said that unbaptized babies go straight to hell and suffer there for eternity. Ibid., 289.

Until the twelfth century, Christians took it for granted that Mary was conceived in original sin. Pope Gregory the Great said emphatically: "Christ alone was conceived without sin." Again and again, he said all human beings are sinful, even the holiest, with the sole exception of Christ. His reasoning and that of all the Fathers leaves no doubt in the matter. The sex act *always* involved sin. Mary was conceived normally, *therefore* in sin; Jesus was conceived virginally, *therefore* without original sin. . . . The cult of the virgin developed apace in the Middle Ages. Catholics tended to lose sight of the humanness of Christ [because of the false view that his human nature differed from ours]. As a result he appeared remote, not so much the Mediator between God and men as God Himself. This created the need for a mediator with the Mediator, someone holy and powerful. The rise of Mariology coincided with the decline of Christology. Ibid. 332, 333.

[Pope] Pius [IX] reinforced the concept of original sin as a hand-on from a remote ancestor Adam who had sinned and transmitted this sin to the rest of the race. Ibid., 341.

Gregory [the Great] was not blind to the problem [the doctrine of original sin] raised. For example, parents were cleansed from original sin in baptism. How could they hand on original sin to their babies? He answers: Though holy themselves, they handed on corrupt nature through sex, desire galvanized by lust. Babies are born as the damned fruit of the lust of their redeemed parents. From the first, they are the offspring of Gehenna or Hell; they are just children of wrath because they are sinners. If they die unbaptized, they are condemned to everlasting torment for the guilt of their birth alone. Existence is itself a state of sin; to be born is to qualify for eternal punishment. Ibid., 452

It is not as if pontiffs and fathers said that they did not know how babies were saved; they said categorically it was impossible. They did not plead ignorance of the fate of the mass of mankind who had never heard of Christ; they affirmed without qualification that they all went to hell. There was no salvation outside the church; and by the church they meant the Catholic church wherein entry was gained *only* by baptism of water. These views were repeated century after century without one dissenting voice. It was Catholic teaching, taught always, everywhere by everyone. We noticed that when Francis Xavier went to the Indies he was certain that unbaptized pagans, *however virtuous*, could not get to heaven. Ibid., 460.

In his book *History of European Morals* W.E.H. Lecky comments upon the "fate" of little babies assumed to possess original sin.⁴

⁴ For a personal testimony concerning the authoritarian nature of the Roman Church's doctrines and priestly practices, see *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome*, by Charles Chiniquy, available from Hartland Publications, P.O.Box 1, Rapidan VA 22733 USA

That a little child who lives but a few minutes after birth and dies before it has been sprinkled with the sacred water is in such a sense responsible for its ancestor having six thousand years before eaten a forbidden fruit, that it may with perfect justice be resuscitated and cast into the abyss of eternal fire in expiation of this ancestral crime, that an all-righteous and merciful Creator, in the full exercise of these attributes, deliberately calls into existence sentient beings whom he had from eternity irrevocably destined to endure unspeakable, unmitigated torture, are propositions which are at once so extravagantly absurd and so ineffably atrocious that their adoption might well lead men to doubt the universality of moral perception. Such teaching is, in fact, simply demonism, and demonism in its most extreme form (quoted in *Ibid.*, 461).

Chapter 23

Swarming “Independents”

Analyze the state of God's church in the Western world. Every apostate wind of doctrine is blowing. Worldly practices are not only evident but are defended. Many of our schools and colleges are in an appalling state of decay. Most of our hospitals are not representative of the church, its mission, its message, or its methods. Our Adventist Book Centers offer a bewildering, eclectic array of books and tapes. Increasing numbers of our church leaders and pastors are encouraging the satanic deception of the charismatic movement. Many of our pastors and members barely veil their adherence to the ecumenical movement. We realize some may see these statements as criticism and as being negative. Such could not be further from the truth. With others we weep tears of deep concern for our beloved church.

The above statements represent the tragic reality of the state of this church. Only a dishonest or desperately deceived member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church could deny them. If we do not face these issues with honesty, we will never fall on our knees in deep contrition of heart asking for God's longsuffering forgiveness. If we fail to recognize that we are fulfilling God's description of the end-time church,

we will never earnestly entreat the Holy Spirit as we diligently search God's Word for His answers.

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. Revelation 3:15-17.

Now is surely a time for "reality therapy" in our church, before it is forever too late.

Despite the state of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which has been chosen by God to proclaim the everlasting gospel to the world, and given the apparent impotency of denominational leaders to stem the onrushing current of apostasy, God is not about to leave His church without witnesses. His providence surely accounts for the rise of leaders from among the laity. The meteoric rise of self-supporting ministries around the world is predictable. These many voices will not be stifled until the close of probation. As a church, however, we are doing no better than the Jews. Jesus today would surely say of us,

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Matthew 23:37.

The rise of the new voices should not be unexpected, for it has been clearly foretold in Inspiration,

The days are fast approaching when there will be great perplexity and confusion. Satan, clothed in angel robes, will deceive, if possible, the very elect. There

will be gods many and lords many. Every wind of doctrine will be blowing. Those who have rendered supreme homage to "science falsely so called" will not be the leaders then. Those who have trusted to intellect, genius, or talent, will not then stand at the head of rank and file. They did not keep pace with the light. Those who have proved themselves unfaithful will not then be entrusted with the flock. In the last solemn work few great men will be engaged. They are self-sufficient, independent of God, and He cannot use them. The Lord has faithful servants, who in the shaking, testing time will be disclosed to view. There are precious ones now hidden who have not bowed the knee to Baal. They have not had the light which has been shining in a concentrated blaze upon you. But, it may be under a rough and uninviting exterior the pure brightness of a genuine Christian character will be revealed. *Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 5, 80-81.

In a number of statements we have been warned that apostasy will increase until the close of probation. Therefore, we should not deny the reality of the fulfillment of this prophecy. These new voices have provided hope for untold tens of thousands who otherwise would see no future for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As God takes things into His own hands, some who seemed least likely are being called to preach and teach the truths with power, rebuke sin, and make earnest calls to holy living.

In 1904, Sister White, burdened by the failure of the board of Emmanuel Missionary College to support Edward Sutherland and Percy Magan, president and dean respectively, and with concerns over John Harvey Kellogg's refusal to accept divine counsel concerning medical work, urged the establishment of a self-supporting institution in Madison, Tennessee. It was to be a pattern for all other self-

supporting institutions. Thereafter, Sister White urged the establishment of self-supporting institutions from New York to London. (*Life Sketches*, 384,385.) But for many decades such institutions were confined, almost exclusively, to the Southern areas of the United States.

In spite of the support of the servant of the Lord to the extent that she became a member of the Madison Institution Board—a position she never accepted for any other institution—the opposition of denominational leaders was fierce. Sutherland and Magan were judged to be reacting to their disappointing experience at Berrien Springs. In the main, General Conference leadership was not sympathetic to Madison and the leaders in the South were deeply threatened. Every effort was made to restrict and bind up Madison's God-given ministry. It took years of the most pointed testimonies of the servant of the Lord before the General Conference finally responded to the God-given ministry of self-supporting work.

On one occasion when the leaders of the Southern field forced Sutherland and Magan, under extreme pressure, to refrain from the recruitment of students from the Southern field. Sister White, in a most pointed testimony, rebuked the church leaders for forcing the issue and Sutherland and Magan for yielding to it.

Such promises should never have been asked or granted. *The Madison School*, 24.

Those words should be reflected upon as church leaders today face the great proliferation of self-supporting institutions. The leaders of these institutions would also do well to heed this counsel.

But first, let us look at the 1909 action taken by the General Conference at the urging of the prophetess,

Whereas: The Southland of the United States and the mission fields offer many opportunities for self-supporting school work; and, Whereas: Not a few of our people are planning to undertake this line of work and, Whereas: A close, friendly relationship should exist between the organized work of the denomination and these self-supporting schools; therefore, We recommend:

1. That the educational departments of our organized work, where these schools are located, provide for their representation in the conference educational departments.

2. That the educational departments assist in the selection of those who shall be encouraged to enter this line of work.

3. That endorsement be given to those selected who need financial assistance, that those from whom funds are solicited may know whom to assist.

4. That the organized work assist in locating said schools, and advise in the expenditure of funds secured from our people.

5. That the closest bonds of sympathy and cooperation be maintained between these self-supporting schools and our organized work.

6. That the educational departments be encouraged to so cooperate with these self-supporting schools that the utmost possible help may be rendered, and the best results accomplished.

We further recommend, that our stronger conferences search out and encourage suitable persons to undertake this self-supporting work, and the workers thus selected be encouraged to pursue a course of instruction at the Nashville Agricultural and Normal Institute [Madison College]. *General Conference Bulletin*, 1909, 372, 373.

Madison was to be the pattern for all relationships between the denomination and subsequently-established supporting institutions. It will be noted that these guidelines do not establish rules for denominational entities to reign over the self-supporting institutions, but rather present an open-armed statement of assistance to these institutions and their leaders.

In the decades that have followed, the vision of the 1909 action has been forgotten. No better example of this changing attitude was shown than when the North Pacific Union took a unilateral action to prescribe the conditions upon which it would grant its recognition of a self-supporting ministry. Unbelievably, others hastened to join the bandwagon and, to the shock of many, the North American Division took action to adopt 11 Guidelines for Self-Supporting Institutions. These guidelines are as follows:

1. The leaders of the independent ministry are members in good and regular standing in the local Seventh-day Adventist Church.

2. The theological positions of the independent ministry are in harmony with the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. (*See Church Manual, 1986 edition, pp. 23-31 and 177-179 on fundamental beliefs and process of doctrinal evaluation.*)

3. The leaders of the independent ministry by words, actions, and publications obviously support and cooperate with the pastors, elected leaders, and the policies of the Seventh-day Adventist Church at all levels of the church organization.

4. Independent ministry leaders who have been ordained as ministers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church but who do not hold current credentials from the church

will not use their ministerial ordination to secure support for their independent ministry.¹

5. The result of the work of an independent ministry should encourage the growth, unity, and harmony of local Seventh-day Adventist churches. Among its fruits should be found the fruits of the Spirit as described in the Bible.

6. The independent ministry encourages its supporters to be faithful in the returning of their tithes and giving of appropriate offerings to the organized Seventh-day Adventist Church and does not knowingly accept tithe from Seventh-day Adventist members.

7. The independent ministry mission is essentially outwardly directed rather than inwardly directed. Its work positively supplements that of the church, carrying out the gospel commission.

8. Upon request, the independent ministry will make available a formal statement of mission, including plans and objectives by which it is willing to have its words, actions, and publications judged.

9. The leaders of the independent ministry will be careful in their use of Seventh-day Adventist terminology and of quotations from the Spirit of Prophecy so as to not mislead those less knowledgeable in those areas.

10. The independent ministry, if it accepts financial gifts, will be registered with the appropriate tax bodies as a nonprofit organization and will provide annual audited financial statements upon request.

¹ Subsequent developments have revealed that this pronouncement has been the forerunner to the removal of credentials from some self-supporting ministers on so-called "technical" grounds. They then find themselves, despite being assured by administration that there is no quarrel with their theology, in a position of conflict with this point of the 11 Guidelines.

11. The independent ministry will have on its guiding board or committee at least some individuals who currently represent the organized Seventh-day Adventist Church. They may be employees of the church and/or lay persons who are elected or appointed to the church executive or governing boards or committees at the local conference or other levels of the church structure. *Adventist Review*, March 2, 1989.

We invite the reader to compare, or rather contrast, the statement of 1909 with that of 1988. Eighty years has certainly brought about a vast difference. While the 1909 statement emphasized the duty of the denominational leadership to supporting ministries, the 1988 statement, by contrast, dictated the demands of such leadership upon the supporting ministries. In this, the 1988 statement demonstrated just how far leadership has moved away from a philosophy of service and adopted a dictatorial policy.

Tragically, not one member of a self-supporting institution was invited to make a contribution to the final decision. In what proved to be the final occasion upon which Colin spent time with Elder Robert Pierson, former General Conference president, in November of 1988, Elder Pierson expressed his sorrow that no self-supporting representatives were there to make suggestions regarding the statement, if indeed the statement was needed at all. Surely the inspired 1909 General Conference statement generated by the counsel of Sister White is still valid. Colin listened as Elder Pierson talked the matter over on the telephone with a General Conference leader. In his conversation, Elder Pierson stated that he had urged that at least two or three self-supporting leaders should have been allowed input before such a statement on the working relationship between the self-supporting and denominational work had been com-

pleted. As Elder Pierson mused "but apparently the brethren did not see light in my suggestion."

These denominational guidelines have caused great confusion in the ranks of supporting ministries. Some, unmindful of divine counsel, have shown unwarranted haste to "prove" their loyalty to denominational leaders. Such supporting leaders have gone further, to denounce faithful ministries who do hold courageously to divine counsel on these matters. Had all supporting ministries stood together, without yielding to wrongful denominational demands, denominational leaders would almost certainly have reconsidered their wrong course and an appropriate readjustment would have been made. Now those who complied are wrongly seen as faithful to the church, and those who continue their ministries in the pathway of divine counsel are often perceived as unfaithful.

The results have been predictable. Many self-supporting workers have whispered their consternation and disapproval. Some have tried to "prove" their loyalty to the church by trying to meet the denominational criteria, many of which are neither fair nor reasonable, and worse still, are quite improper. It will be noted that some of the criteria are such that many denominational institutions would fail miserably to meet them. Let us examine them.

Guideline One: None is more obviously discriminating than the very first. Many leaders in denominational institutions are not even members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, much less in good and regular standing at a local Seventh-day Adventist Church. This trend is especially true of our health system, but also is true of some in our educational institutions.

In 1990, for example, Atlantic Union College appointed a Roman Catholic, Dr. Frank Mazzaglia, as executive assistant

to the president. —Letter written by Dr. Lawrence Geraty, president of Atlantic Union College to the College Staff and Faculty dated January 2, 1990.

Guideline Two: To those of us who grew up with the understanding that the Adventist Church had no creed but the Bible, this reference to the 27 Statements voted in 1980 at the Dallas General Conference session is clearly used in an alarmingly credal way. This confirms growing fears that our church is moving into the dangerous trap of credalism. Most self-supporting ministries will resist this drift, but unanimously will they pledge loyalty to the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

Guideline Three: The nature of this guideline raises grave concern. While almost all self-supporting ministries are unwaveringly loyal to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its message, this "guideline" is open to the interpretation, at a time when apostasy among pastors is epidemic, that irrespective of the pastors' aberrant theology, they must be supported. Such indiscriminate support would be in contradiction to every God-given principle. Of course, there are no supporters more loyal to faithful pastors and leaders than self-supporting workers; but to support unfaithful pastors would be disloyalty to God. Would it have been proper to support Caiaphas?

Guideline Four: This "guideline" is irrelevant. Those who are or were credentialed ministers, while still acknowledging Christ's call upon their lives and services, do not see human support as the basis of validating their ministry. They urge that their ministry be evaluated in the spotlight of God's unfailing Word.

Guideline Five: This "guideline" is the objective of almost all self-supporting institutions. Their objective is to

teach the foundation of true unity through sanctifying truth and to warn against false calls to a unity built upon consensus and compromise. Almost all are aggressively engaged in soul-winning for the growth of the Seventh-day Adventist church and God's kingdom.

Guideline Six: Most though not all self-supporting institutions, while not soliciting tithe, do accept it for their ministries. Unfortunately, a handful of the less favored ministries have been singled out for harassment on this issue. As one conference president admitted, those who are not harassed are those considered by leaders as more positive toward the church. Indeed, this type of subjective evaluation, rather than the acceptance of tithe *per se*, is the true issue.

Because of the widespread apostasy in the church, many faithful Seventh-day Adventists conscientiously believe that they cannot support the ministries of those who are unfaithful to their trust, yet they are committed to returning their tithe faithfully. While many would not agree with their evaluation, nevertheless one cannot deny their sincerity. In the interest of the church and the finishing of God's work on earth, it is better, far better, that their tithe be placed in the hands of self-supporting ministries than that their tithe be donated to some non-Seventh-day Adventist organization. This guideline is essentially opposed to Sister White's statement that, though she would wish that such individuals would have more confidence in the church, nevertheless she was willing to take their tithe and use it elsewhere for them. She herself sometimes used tithe to support self-supporting workers.

Guideline Seven: This guideline is difficult to understand. It implies that a self-supporting ministry should take

scant interest in the spiritual life of the church. Self-supporting workers are as surely a part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as are denominational workers and laity. While almost all self-supporting ministries have vigorous soul-winning endeavors outside the membership of the church, they recognize that the work of God will not be finished until God's church is united in truth and sanctification. They have a strong work to do within *and* outside God's church.

Men of action are needed—men who will labor with earnest, ceaseless energy *for the purifying of the church and the warning of the world*. *Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 5, 187, emphasis added.

Guideline Eight: Most self-supporting institutions gladly follow this guideline, but is it the prerogative of the church to demand it? We think not.

Guideline Nine: This is, to say the least, an intriguing statement. Generally speaking, in recent years the events of Seventh-day Adventist history would indicate that most self-supporting workers are far more careful and loyal to the integrity of the Spirit of Prophecy than many denominational employees. It would be accurate to say that, had all denominational institutions remained true to the counsels of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, few self-supporting institutions would now exist. In saying this, we have to acknowledge, however, that our laity must rise up and work with the ministry if the gospel commission is to be completed.

Guideline Ten: This guideline is totally out of place. While almost all the best-known self-supporting ministries are registered as non-profit organizations, some fine ministries, especially among nursing homes, are "for profit" organizations.

Guideline Eleven: While most self-supporting ministries have denominationally associated board members, this criterion is not reasonable. After all, these are self-supporting ministries. It would be just as valid to insist that Conference committees have at least one self-supporting worker associated with them; this, too, would not be fair. It is wise for no such interference to take place. Self-supporting institutions wisely seek to find those board members who are best able to represent their goals and mission. Incredibly, some denominational leaders, claiming to support these guidelines, have discouraged denominational workers from sitting upon these boards of self-supporting ministries, when elected.

Some have added a twelfth guideline, attempting to restrict the speaking of self-supporting workers to places approved denominationally. It has always been the tradition of self-supporting ministries that their speakers receive and respond to calls to ministries at other self-supporting institutions and to lay groups. The attempt to hedge up this part of their ministry is not prudent. To try to bind up God-given ministries with bureaucratic red tape is unwise. One of the greatest benefits of self-supporting ministries is that they can be operated frugally and without unnecessary delays in responding to calls and needs.

While we advocate that it would be preferable if no guidelines were adopted, the following is a suggestion of a more realistic set of guidelines that would encompass all ministries, denominational and self-supporting.

1. The leaders of denominational and supporting ministries are to be faithful Seventh-day Adventists.
2. The beliefs of both denominational and supporting ministries are to be in harmony with the doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as pre-

sented in Scripture and illuminated by the Spirit of Prophecy.

3. The leaders of supporting ministries at all levels and denominational leaders and pastors at all levels, are to be clearly seen as mutually cooperative and supportive of each other, and by words, actions, and publications to be clearly seen to be working in harmony to advance the redemptive mission of Christ as undertaken by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

4. There shall be a relationship of mutual respect for and by denominational leaders, and leaders of supporting ministries; and the ordained status of those in supporting ministries, so long as they are faithful Seventh-day Adventists, shall be no different from that of a retired minister of the church in good and regular standing.

5. The work and results of supporting ministries shall be to actively foster the growth, unity and harmony of any and all local Seventh-day Adventist congregations and of the church at large. All candidates prepared for baptism under the leadership of the supporting ministries shall be baptized by those only who are duly qualified under the biblical standards and policies of the church, and shall be voted into membership of a local congregation in the regular manner. Nothing in the work of supporting ministries shall foster or encourage the establishment of congregations in any manner separate from those authorized to be established by the church in its ordained manner. All employees of the ministry shall be encouraged to be active and supportive members of local congregations.

6. The supporting ministries will consistently encourage their supporters to be faithful in returning their tithes, and otherwise faithful in demonstrating their stewardship in support of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and will not solicit tithe from Seventh-day Adventist members.

7. The supporting ministries will provide the Conference with a formal statement of philosophy and mission which will afford an objective standard by which their overall operations may be evaluated.

8. Denominational leaders, pastors, and leaders of supporting ministries, will be careful in their use of terminology and of quotations from the Spirit of Prophecy, so as to avoid in any way a distortion of the messages to the church from the Lord's messenger.

9. Supporting ministries have the same obligation as denominational ministries in accepting gifts, to arrange appropriate registration as required by the Internal Revenue Services and to prepare annual financial statements supported by regular audit reports.

10. Supporting and denominational ministries will have on their Board of Trustees only faithful Seventh-day Adventists. As openings occur and as persons may respond to the invitation, they may include members of various committees or boards at the level of the local conference or at other levels of the church organization, who are fully supportive of the supporting ministries.

11. In case of questions or disagreements which may arise between the supporting ministries and denominational leaders, it will be the duty of the local conference and of the supporting ministry to each name one pastor and two laymen, with the six mutually selecting a seventh person who will serve as chairman. The selected group will hear the questions and concerns as viewed by each entity and render a finding as to the validity of the questions or disagreements, and outline what is required to resolve the matter when specific actions by either or both parties are required. (Adapted from suggestions made by Herbert Hill.)

We counsel those advocating any guidelines to consider the history of other churches, since restrictive measures, as

indicated in the North American Division guidelines, have all too frequently been the response of churches who have drifted from their foundational truths. Under such circumstances, similar "guidelines" have been used to suppress those who have led out in the advocacy of truth and righteousness and the call to the church back to its upright position of distinction.

Already, serious but predictable consequences have emerged. What were presented as "guidelines" are becoming statutes set in concrete, which leaders seek to use to discredit some of the ministries that, in deep earnestness, seek to warn God's people, many of whom are oblivious to their lost condition. Thus, as the servant of the Lord warned, vigorous efforts are being exerted to mute the voices of warning and reproof. If ever God's church needed faithful watchmen, it is in the closing stages of earth's history. Our plea to our church is "Be careful how you treat the earnest warnings of God's faithful servants."

Perhaps one further concern should be expressed. It is difficult to determine who invented the pejorative term, "independent ministry." Such a nomenclature by its very nature implies a certain form of conduct uncooperative with the church and denominational organization. It has consistently been the experience of Colin that, while some denominational leaders are very cooperative, where there has been a schism between self-supporting and denominational ministries, a gap was much more likely to have been forged by denominational leaders than by self-supporting ministries. Overwhelmingly, self-supporting ministries are almost overly anxious to work with the church that they love so much.

In 1990 an *ad hoc* committee of the Association of Services and Industries (A.S.I.) urged that leaders refer to these ministries, not as independent, but as supporting ministries. Further, great concern has been expressed as to the 11 points of the guidelines for independent ministries. Significant re-evaluation of the relationships between denominational and supporting ministries is essential to achieve God's goal, for Sister White is reported to have once said,

Until the laity link hands with the ministry, and the medical ministry with evangelism, and the self-supporting ministries with denominational ministries, the work on earth will not be finished.

Chapter 24

A Conspiracy of Silence

Many Seventh-day Adventists have forfeited the gift of clear thought evident in our early believers. Numerous church members harbor a silent concern about the trends evident in our church but they dare not express such concerns in public, judging that to do so would make matters worse. Well may we ask, "What sort of thinking is this?"

God's church today needs a generation of Ebed-melechs. Ebed-melech is one of the unsung heroes of Scripture. God's church was in deep trouble. Apostasy was rife. To stand for truth was to court dungeon and death. To support God's servants was regarded as an indication of disloyalty to God's church. Unfounded rumors concerning noble men such as Jeremiah were the order of the day as men attempted to destroy his witness. To listen to the truth of God was regarded with extreme disfavor by those who set themselves up as exponents of the Word.

But where were those prepared to name names and to cry aloud for justice for those of God's children who were ill-treated? Perhaps it was fear of experiencing similar treatment which caused many concerned folk to preserve their

silence. No doubt they salved their consciences by explaining that they did not wish to further escalate the problems within God's church and they felt that silence was demanded in loyalty to God and His church. As they thus justified their rank cowardice, God's faithful servants endured torture, dungeon, and death.

But Ebed-melech was of different mettle. He was not a coward. He did not preserve silence at the expense of another. He did not count the cost, nor did he mince his words when he perceived wrong. It must have taken courage for this servant to go in before King Zedekiah and declare,

My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon. Jeremiah 38:9.

Who were these men? Jeremiah did not refrain from recording the names of the perpetrators of this evil in his book. They were Shephatiah son of Mattan, Gedaliah son of Pashur, Jucal son of Shelemiah, and Pashur son of Malchiah (Jeremiah 38:1). Ebed-melech's was not a false compassion, that he would speak about the evil of these men behind closed doors. Many today feign horror when a perpetrator of evil within God's church is openly named, yet those very persons feel no sense of hypocrisy when they name names in secret discussions. Such conduct is widespread. It is to be deplored.

Had Ebed-melech not openly condemned these four men, who held far higher stations in life than he, Jeremiah would undoubtedly have died of hunger in that dungeon. Yet others sat by in silence, fully aware of the injustice of Jeremiah's plight, cognizant of the fact that he was a man of God and fully aware of the evil hearts of the four malefactors. Per-

haps these onlookers condemned Ebed-melech for evidencing the courage they themselves lacked. He stirred up trouble. He did not permit God to solve the problem in His own good time. He showed a lack of respect for the leaders. He did not go about his complaint in the proper manner. If only he had done things *our* way, it would have been preferable. He had probably made matters worse for Jeremiah. And so the criticisms no doubt escalated as they do today. Empty words! Statements devoid of veracity or value! Sentences constructed in order to conceal one's own lack of courage to stand boldly against wrong whatever the status of the perpetrator!

Ebed-melech was black and a eunuch, a slave in a white household, but yet was a man of courage and compassion. He took his stand for right, not because he could hope to gain influence and authority, nor because Jeremiah was his special friend, but simply because it was right. He had no hope, no thought, to stem the tide of evil in the king's court. He was not trying to build political influence for slaves, or for blacks, or for eunuchs. He made no bid to become a leader, or to gain favor for one party at the expense of another.

He simply stood for right because it was right.

It is the fashion of our world today to work within the system, to use the system to bring about social change. A few seem to have high ideals, but many who clamor for position appear to be devoted to position rather than to justice.

Following the fashion of the world, we hear cries for appointment to position in our church of men of race, in order that ethnic balance may be seen in our leadership. The cries have been strident from Africa, from Asia, and from Latin America, that certain positions be reserved for men of those areas. Much time was spent at the New Orleans Gen-

eral Conference (1985) in discussing the demands of African delegations for a general vice president of the General Conference to be elected from among their number. At Indianapolis a plea was made for more Asian representation in the General Conference. And in more subtle ways, Westerners promote their own candidature for holy office, perhaps not perceiving their own emphasis on race. These bids for position and influence on the basis of race or of personal advancement are manifestly wrong.

It is time, irrespective of race, for God's people to stand up and call sin by its right name; to stand in godly courage and call for purity and faith. It is time that we all cease this desire for position and the praise of church leaders, and instead commit ourselves to be humble servants of God.

✓ In January 1989, a South Pacific Division Youth Congress was held in Canberra. At that congress, satanic rock music masquerading as "gospel" music was blasted to these young people. Praise God, there were some Ebed-melechs present. They were young people from Papua-New Guinea. They refused to be affronted with such blasphemy and stoutly declared that their mission in their homeland was to call people away from such Satan-inspired music. Today in Australia and New Zealand, we need Christian missionaries from Papua-New Guinea to call us away from our growing paganism. Oh, for more of these Ebed-melechs throughout the world!

As God has men in Africa, Asia, and Latin America of deep consecration and appropriate ability, let these men be appointed and let the world church rejoice. God knows we have need of such men whatever their race. And let their voices be raised against apostasy, and against maltreatment of God's saints. And whether we be appointed to leadership

positions or simply serve in our local church, let men and women of all races break our cowardly silence when God's church and His truth and standards are under assault. Let us cease to have sealed lips and paralyzed tongues when a true brother is falsely treated by men in leadership posts within God's church. Let the conspiracy of silence be broken, and let us learn from the example of that great man of God, Ebed-melech.

God's reward to Ebed-melech was great, for He promised,

I will deliver thee in that day, saith the Lord: and thou shalt not be given into the hand of men of whom thou art afraid. Jeremiah 39:17.

Such will be the reward of all who nobly follow the fine example of this compassionate and true man.

Then as capable, godly Asians, Latin Americans, Africans are available, the church will be greatly blessed if every effort is made to elect representatives of the various regions of the earth so that the contributions of individuals from different backgrounds and environments can be fully and fairly presented at the General Conference level.

Chapter 25

Loyalty

Loyalty is a divine quality. True loyalty does not abide in the unregenerate heart. The unconverted frequently display a counterfeit loyalty, seen most evidently among politicians. Most will be scrupulously “loyal” to their party leader upon whose favor they depend for the receipt of political honors. Frequently this “loyalty” is only present when they have absolutely no possibility of replacing the leader. But should it become clear that such a one may have the numbers to win a ballot for the leadership, his “loyalty” to his leader quickly dissolves.

Tragically, in our church this counterfeit loyalty is often valued, while genuine loyalty to God and His church is scorned. Incredibly, in many areas it is the genuinely loyal who are represented as disloyal. We say *incredibly* and yet we should not be surprised, as history fully attests to the fact that genuine loyalty has ever been thus portrayed.

We may well inquire whether Christ was disloyal to the Jewish church. Undoubtedly, the vast majority of Jews, including most of the church leadership, would have declared Christ to be disloyal, without the least hesitation. Yet no man was ever as loyal as Christ to the Jewish church. The concept of loyalty to the church, cherished by the Jews of Christ’s day, is one that is accepted by most Christians

today. These Jews placed the importance of loyalty in the following descending order:

1. Loyalty to church leadership.
2. Loyalty to the priests.
3. Loyalty to the laity.
4. Loyalty to God.

Only when this order is reversed do we have true loyalty to God's church.

As Seventh-day Adventists, we stoutly defend the principle that we uphold all the laws of our nation with great fidelity, except where they conflict with the plain Word of God. Yet most church leaders and members appear to disregard this principle when applied to the dictates of church leaders or pastors. For many Seventh-day Adventists, loyalty to church leaders is more important than loyalty to God. While proclaiming that their loyalty to their God is paramount, the actions of many deny their uttered claim.

Let us illustrate this matter by referring to some leaders of the Jewish church who proved to be very "loyal" to the church.

Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. John 12:42, 43.

God alone knows just how many leaders today have adopted a "loyalty" to God's church of the quality demonstrated by these rulers. We rationalize our love for the praise of men by clothing our pride in the garment of "loyalty" to God's church. We plead with leaders and pastors and church officers to stand up for Jesus, not to protect the pathetic reputations we possess upon this earth. Do we no longer

believe that we have, ever so shortly, to stand before God's judgment bar?

We know that Ezekiel's strong warning, that only those who sigh and cry for the abominations in God's church (Ezekiel 9:4) will receive the seal of God, has become an oft-repeated warning to God's people. But we propose no apology for once more utilizing this text. It is a solemn one. Our church today is full of unprecedented abominations. Yet those who are genuinely upset by this desecration of God's church are placed under the suspicion of disloyalty.

It is not those who cry and sigh for these abominations who direct means away from God's church. They are not of the class who dishonestly deprive God's work of its means and direct it to their own pockets. Those who are genuinely grieved are not they who practice adultery or homosexuality. They do not uphold soul-destroying error. Such cannot follow a course of ministry, the chief purpose of which is to foster their own personal advancement. Among these souls are to be found those who serve the church and cooperate with leaders in utter faithfulness, only withholding such cooperation when a clear principle of God is violated. They do not waste time in the pulpit preaching sermons which could be preached with equal facility in the fallen churches of Babylon. It is not they who are recklessly destroying the faith of our precious young people in our colleges. Nor do they destroy our medical missionary outreach by following worldly standards of medical practice. They do not utilize our presses in order to print error and deliberately exclude truth. They do not shame their God by upholding worldly standards.

For this fidelity, they are cruelly accused of adopting a "holier than thou" attitude. But they feel anything but a sense

of superior holiness. Those who sigh and cry, recognize that they are saved by Jesus' grace, and that alone.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. Ephesians 2:8,9.

It is not spiritual pride that motivates such persons, for each has no grounds for such pride and fully recognizes that fact. Such have a sincere and close relationship with Jesus Christ, His church and His people. They sense deep sorrow when they see the one object of His supreme regard following a course to absolutely disgrace the One who has bestowed such love upon it. They weep because their Saviour weeps. They sigh because He does. They seek to point out the faulty course and to call for true reform, because He commissions them so to do. They are loyal, for He is loyal.

In writing his thought-provoking book, *Reaping the Whirlwind*, Pastor Joe Crews, director of Amazing Facts, outlined the problem to be faced by each one proclaiming the truth within our church today.

But I am brought back to the horns of my dilemma. How does one speak so boldly about specific sins in the church without being accused of attacking the church? Joe Crews, *Reaping the Whirlwind*, 17.

Pastor Crews soon discovered the answer to his question—one cannot avoid such accusations. His fine book suffered bitter criticism from those unprepared to accept its message of reproof.

Pastor Crews's earnest desire to avoid misinterpretation of

the strong, incisive language which [he] felt was needed to strike conviction to a sleeping congregation Ibid., 8.

also failed to be fulfilled in many quarters of our church. No doubt Pastor Crews, while disappointed, was not unprepared for such a response, for his wonderful Amazing Facts radio broadcasts were spurned by some of our Seventh-day Adventist radio stations. One station manager explained the decision to discontinue the broadcasts on the basis that

we had understood initially that the approach of Amazing Facts would be much more indirect than it is. The very strong doctrinal emphasis with forceful treatment of the Sabbath-Sunday issue seems not to fit the tenor of our work. Ibid., 26,27.

A second Seventh-day Adventist radio station cancelled the program because the management was

trying to reach a secular audience. Your program comes on too strongly on a religious note. Ibid., 27.

Today, Seventh-day Adventists do not believe it loyal to uphold purity and truth and denounce that which God denounces, either within the church or before the world.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is God's church. It is worthy of our every sacrifice, for any sacrifice is negligible when compared with that of the Lord Jesus Christ. His church merits our unswerving loyalty. This may only be offered by absolute loyalty to Jesus. Then *genuine* loyalty to His flock and to the ministry and leadership of His church will automatically follow.

One of the finest essays ever produced on loyalty was written by Sister Laurel Damsteegt, who was a fellow-worker with Russell when he was president of the Bangkok Adventist Hospital. She stated that

To be loyal to others in spite of disappointment or perceived betrayal is at best difficult. Laurel Damsteegt, *Loyalty*, *Adventists Affirm*, Fall 1989.

Many overlook the unbounded loyalty to God's Church and its leaders, shown by church members in the face of persecution from these leaders; shown as well by abuse endured, and by deep distress at the betrayal of our faith. In circumstances such as these, it is a measure of genuine loyalty when these distraught ones still serve their church and their God. Yet such loyalty is seldom respected. In her essay Sister Damsteegt continued,

At times loyalty requires crying aloud and sparing not — not in a crude destructive way, but in an all-out effort to salvage. . . .

Loyalty does not always mean smiling and assenting. Sometimes it can be confrontational. . . . The church is in flux, and now is the time to stand. Now decisions are being made that will forever affect the way we interpret Scripture and Ellen G. White. How we interpret the Bible on the structure of leadership of the future will leave its stamp on the Seventh-day Adventist church. Not yet, I think, is it time to sit by and knit? Loyalty means action. And if my loyalty is perceived as pernicious, I feel sad, for it is born of love, great love for the church that I have always known and defended. Ibid.

The writer was not advocating defiance of leadership, and neither would defiance be countenanced by the authors of this book, for

Defiance speaks of force, of disobedience, of pushing on in one's way. Ibid.

Former President of the United States, Richard Nixon, has correctly stated,

In any organization loyalty must run down, as well as up. *Time*, April 2, 1990. ✓

In the Seventh-day Adventist Church, it must not only run down from the laity through all levels of church organization to the General Conference president, but also up from the General Conference president to the laity. Very frequently in God's church only the first of these loyalties is demanded. Loyalty of leaders to the laity is often regarded as non-essential. However, loyalty of leaders to their flocks is vastly more lacking than loyalty of laity to the ministry and leadership. It is here that the emphasis on loyalty needs to be focused.

But far more important even than this is the fact that loyalty to God is frequently forgotten by both laity and ministry. Tragic have been the consequences.

Chapter 26

Value Beyond Estimation

Never has there been a period in the history of our church when there have been more stresses upon church leaders and pastors. Some may conclude that the authors of this work are oblivious to these pressures. Not so! We have only the greatest empathy with our leaders as they tackle the awesome challenges of the present decade. In his Union conference duties, Russell receives letters from leaders expressing the anguish of their hearts as they struggle with the problems of leadership. It is not easy to bring help and courage to such men. One wrote, "I hope you are thinking hard to find a replacement here. I am dead serious now in wanting to leave at the end of this year. . . . I am getting frustrated and tired running this place. Not so much the work but the support of administration. The Administrative Committee meeting yesterday was pitiful. I am frustrated holding Administrative Committee Meetings. . . . Please, this is no cry wolf. I am serious. I don't want to have a heavy burden on my heart each day." This man was a fine leader who had, under God's blessing, brought unprecedented success to the area of his responsibility. But his distress was obvious. He suffered from upholding Seventh-day Adventist

standards and hearing committee members criticize these to those not of our faith.

It could well be that this decade is the last we will spend on a sin-cursed planet. It is true that church members sometimes spare little thought for those who have assumed leadership responsibilities. It can be a lonely calling. Our pastors and leaders need our sincere prayers. They need our support. We are well aware of our own personal needs in this matter. We are always greatly encouraged when dear brothers or sisters inform us that we are on their prayer lists. How we need those prayers!

It is so easy for those of our temperament, with its inflammable mix of Irish, Scot, English, and German genes to become utterly disgusted by the marked apostasy and injustices widespread in God's church. Sometimes we feel like the senior pastor who, when accused of being one of the Concerned Brethren, strongly denied it. "I am not a Concerned Brother," he declared, "I am a disgusted one!" But we dare not lose sight of the fact that the perpetrators of the wrongs that evince such reactions are men loved of God and in need of His divine grace. Rather than showering them with contempt, we need to pity these men, most of whom mistakenly believe that they are fulfilling God's will. Our prayers must ever ascend on their behalf. God has declared,

Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! Jeremiah 23:1.

Further, He has warned us that

many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion underfoot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness. Jeremiah 12:10.

Fearful consequences to those who lead God's people astray are foretold,

Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life: therefore ye shall see no more vanity, nor divine divinations: for I will deliver my people out of your hand: and ye shall know that I am the Lord. Ezekiel 13:22,23.

And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart. Malachi 2:1, 2.

The poor treatment of senior pastors is alluded to in Scripture,

Princes are hanged up by their [persecutors'] hand: the faces of elders were not honored. Lamentations 5:12.

But God has a wonderful promise for His flock:

I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. Jeremiah 3:15.

So disillusioned have many laypeople become with many in the leadership of our church, that they fear that virtually all leaders have forsaken the path of righteousness. When we cite the names and deeds of many wonderful leaders in the General Conference, it is not unusual to hear responses similar to, "I'm surprised and pleased to hear your report, for I had thought they'd all apostatized." In truth, at every level

of our church, from the laity right down to the General Conference, there is rank apostasy. But also there are those who are true as the needle to the pole. God does have a true people within His church, both in the ministry and in the laity. His church will triumph! He *will* call it blessed.

We are deeply sentimental men. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is very dear to us. It has been our lives and our all since our earliest recollections, because it is the church of our Saviour. This is why we experience such a deep hurt when we view its present decline. We look back to the godly ministers who shaped our lives and gave their all in the cause of God. It breaks our hearts to see these men ill-used and despised. We recall the utter dedication of our father and our late mother and the great sacrifices they endured because of their love for God and His church. They were not alone. A whole generation of believers likewise cheerfully sacrificed. Thus when we see men desiring to line their own pockets with the means that our God has designated for the advancement of His work, we weep.

We recall the countless sacrifices of our mother and father as they dug deep into their pockets to give financial support to our church, even in the terrible times of the great economic depression of the 1930s. We recall the amazing sums they amassed for investment offerings, a life-time commitment. When Russell walked into his parents' bedroom on May 5, 1974, the morning of our dear mother's sudden and unexpected death, he opened the drawer of her dressing table. Although the second quarter of 1974 was barely one third completed, already our faithful mother had a considerable sum of money set aside for the investment offering to be collected seven weeks later. Russell took that last gift of our mother to her Lord and church, added to it the

amount he judged she would have done had she lived and passed it in on the appropriate Sabbath as the last gift of love from a humble woman who loved Jesus and His church. Our parents were never blessed with even middle class wealth, but they ever gave their all to this church we love.

We remember the countless Sundays spent in the oppressive heat of Australian summers, going from house to house on the annual appeal for missions. Our parents spared no effort. We recall our mother's *Signs* round at a time when the Australasian *Signs of the Times* truly lived up to its name. We recollect the happy times spent with our father as he went out giving Bible studies.

And our parents were not isolated cases. A whole generation and more stretched every sinew of their bodies to promote a truth so sure and so firm that it was worth giving their all in its cause. They would have gladly died for their Saviour and His truth. We have distinct memories of men whose ministries stretched back to another end-of-century decade, the last of the nineteenth century. Long since dead and almost forgotten by all but our God, that noble band of pioneers bore much to provide the platform and facilities that our church enjoys today. But we do these men and women no honor when we abuse the very church they gave their all to uphold. When greed, position-seeking, unfaithfulness, destruction of truth, decimation of standards, and other evils become blatant, as they now are in our church, every true Adventist needs to arise and oppose those who so carelessly disgrace our church, no matter how high their position of trust.

It is time, we repeat, that church members cease to expect so little of their ministers and church leaders that they will tolerate from them corruptions that they would never permit

from a fellow layman. It is time that we cease believing that we are loyal to God and His church when we support the pastor and church administrators irrespective of their wrongful actions in destroying God's church. Unmerited support is due to perverse thinking. The One who is our Example never uplifted the Jewish leaders in their evil. Let us by all means seek to restore such ones, as Christ would have us do, but not permit evil to destroy the one object of Christ's supreme regard. Our love for Jesus is paramount. Would we have supported the church leaders in Christ's day in order to be loyal to Him? Present indications are that the majority of our members would have done so, and in so doing they would have crucified the very One whom they misguidedly believed they were supporting. Brothers and sisters, let us cease to crucify our dear Lord afresh by the very same senseless actions today.

So shallow has become the thinking of many church members that they conclude that pastors who would write a book such as this, baring their hearts for all to read, must have a poor working and social relationship with their fellow-ministers and church leaders. No conclusion could be further from truth.

In 1978 Russell was invited to preach in the Loma Linda Campus Hill Church. Desmond Ford was at the acme of his popularity within the church and was presenting a Week of Prayer at Loma Linda University Church—how frequently our academic centers promote the messages of those who are destroying the faith. Russell had co-authored a book in 1976 with Dr. John Clifford, exposing the serious defects in Dr. Ford's views. This book, *Conflicting Concepts of Righteousness by Faith in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Australasian Division*, had caused a great furor in Australia

and New Zealand and had brought the whole force of ecclesiastical displeasure upon our heads. (See *Adventism Challenged*, two volumes, written by the authors of this book, Hartland Publications, Rapidan, Virginia 22733.) Des Ford had read the work and had published a rejoinder. He was decidedly displeased, and little wonder, for that book had exposed his subtle errors in detail for the first time. At that time, church leaders who would not care to mention Des' name in 1990, rose in great vehemence to his defense and this emboldened Dr. Ford in his error. Naturally, he imagined he could count on support for his un-scriptural notions at the very highest level of God's church in his homeland. And so he could, until Dr. Ford fell out of favor with the General Conference, and then these men quickly fell into line. We do not admire compliance of such a nature.

During Russell's 1978 visit to Loma Linda, he found himself accommodated in the Loma Linda Motel in a room adjoining one in which Des Ford was staying. Pastor Jim Wolter, pastor of the Ontario Church, twenty miles from Loma Linda, was visiting with Russell. He had never met Dr. Ford but had read his materials extensively and had early noted their deceptiveness. Pastor Wolter knew of Russell's open opposition to Des Ford's doctrinal views.

In the course of the day Des and Russell chanced to meet one another. Pastor Wolter was present. There followed an hour and a half of friendly conversation, even when we discussed our strongly held differences. Des and Russell were still the old college pals of 1950 and their thoughts turned to those days. No acrimonious words passed their lips. At the conclusion of that visit, Pastor Wolter privately expressed to Russell his surprise at the cordiality of the meeting. He did not fully understand the abrasive Australian

personality, which holds beliefs very strongly, and loudly opposes those felt to be erroneous, while underneath harboring a soft heart, one of genuine friendship and true loyalty.

There is nothing we enjoy more, outside our family circles, than fellowship with the brethren. In Australia, Jamaica and the United States, Colin has ever valued close friendship with God's people and many leaders. In the Far East, Russell has the privilege of working with some of the most amiable and dedicated men and women he has known. There one can speak to his conscientiously held beliefs and not be misunderstood. On our frequent visits to the General Conference office, the fellowship with church leaders is warm and joyous. Perhaps the greatest thrill for us in attending General Conference sessions is the renewing of old friendships, cast over many years of denominational service each on three continents and with frequent speaking appointments on a fourth.

Some have questioned the reaction to a book such as this. We do not doubt that it is, in all likelihood, the most forthright presentation of its kind ever contributed to by a credentialed Seventh-day Adventist pastor in current denominational employment. We make no apologies for that. It is a book long overdue. But we know all too well the spectrum of responses. They will range from righteous indignation and cries of refutation, all the way to virtual total agreement. There will even be some who will believe that Russell's position in church employment has tempered his words. We pray Russell has not yielded to such a consideration, for it would be unworthy of the solemn vows we have taken. It is true that not a few workers in self-supporting institutions silence their voices for fear of criticism from church leaders. We pray that Colin is not to be found among

this group. Many will secretly express their agreement but will, for their own reasons, take great care to avoid making this fact known to those who have a significant input into their upward mobility. Almost all will recognize the veracity of what is here written, but their held biases will determine their varying responses.

To write this book has not been an easy task. Each of us has agonized over it. Many drafts have been made as we sought to express our deep concerns in the least confrontational manner. Entire chapters have been altered, paragraphs modified, sentences re-drafted. Counsel has been sought from other faithful brethren. But we do not write in order to receive acclaim. A book of this nature could never serve such an aim. Our sole purpose in writing this book is an endeavor to awaken our dear ministers and lay people to the apostasy on a massive scale within our midst, and to their beholden duty to rise in defense of the faith. We write not in order to condemn, but so that a dramatic reformation may begin, which God's Spirit alone can empower. Unless we confess our errors, reform will not ensue.

We would have desired that others accept the burden of writing a book such as this, but there is such timidity within our ranks that few would dare. We confess that we ourselves are not immune to such fears. But we believe that we dare not yield to such considerations, lest we fail our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

Our sincere prayer is that each reader, whether minister or layperson, will recognize his or her personal responsibility for the abysmal state of our beloved church. Of a truth, if it were not so, God would not be tempted to spue us out of His mouth. Revelation 3:16. We are an integral part of this church. We are as guilty as any for the corporate loss of faith

and standards. But this failure does not serve as an excuse for lack of repentance and a desire to stand up and be counted on the side of our Saviour, His faith, and His church.

Now is not a time to abandon God's church. It is sick, nigh unto death, but our God has revealed to us,

The church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out — the chaff separated from the precious wheat. This is a terrible ordeal, but nevertheless it must take place. None but those who have been overcoming by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony will be found with the loyal and true, without spot or stain of sin, without guile in their mouths. We must be divested of our self-righteousness and arrayed in the righteousness of Christ. *Selected Messages*, Book 2, 380.

Impossible as it now appears, God will have a church, "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," one that is "holy and without blemish." Ephesians 5:27. What a church!

But we will not be part of that church unless we too are spotless, unwrinkled, holy, and unblemished in character, nor will any other person. Such men and women will not be found disgracing their church by apostasy, dishonesty or immorality. They will not use our precious church simply as a vehicle to satisfy their own ambitions and to accumulate inappropriate means. They will not callously treat fellow ministers and members. In short, they will be Christlike.

It is time that we take an honest stock of our church. What we will find will not be an encouraging picture. But we shall never seek God's assistance to set matters right while we persistently refuse to acknowledge the terrible evils within

our midst, that cry out for redress. Surely now is the time to cry aloud to our Lord that He come and cleanse us as individuals and as a church. We are in harvest time. The remaining fraction of a second of probationary time is ebbing away with lightning speed. Soon each name will be carefully examined before the awesome judgment bar of God. Names will be accepted, names rejected. Dare we any longer trifle with evil? Dare we longer fail to represent aright the Saviour who shed His blood for us?

Appendix A

The Boolaroo Letter

FULL TEXT OF LETTER WRITTEN TO THE
PRESIDENT OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION BY
MRS KERRY HARRISON, CHURCH CLERK,
BOOLAROO CHURCH DATED JANUARY 24, 1990

I am writing to you as I am greatly concerned over the way Pastor and Mrs. Cooke's transfer was handled. This letter was meant to be sent quite a while ago but to research the facts from the Church minutes has taken quite some time.

I attended the funeral of Mavis Cooke and I am deeply grieved, as this quite possibly might never have ended like this had the issue of their transfer not been pushed so much. I will never understand WHY this organisation did this to two elderly people, especially to the Cookes who have given years of service to the Church.

I am a member of Boolaroo Church and as a child I attended this Church. Boolaroo holds a special place in my heart. I am telling you this because even with the threat by [the president of the North New South Wales Conference (Pres.NNSWC)] of the disbandment from the sisterhood of churches hanging over our heads, I was still willing to stand

for what is right and leave the consequences to God. What has happened in our little church could happen again. Up until this time I didn't realize that we have absolutely no say in the church. I didn't think this organization would use its power to reverse a church's decision. But this was done, under the influence of evil. I have witnessed a display of unChristian behaviour in the past six months that will suffice for a lifetime.

I wish to present to you the actual facts surrounding the Cooke issue:

1. November 5th, 1988 - Pastor and Mrs. Cooke, at the invitation of Church members, requested transfer to Boolaroo Church.

In a letter from [the pastor of the Avondale Memorial Church (Pastor A)], dated November 13, 1989, he states that these transfers were not presented to Avondale Memorial Board until January 23rd, 1989, and an action was taken at that meeting to table Pastor Cooke's transfer pending an investigation and response from the TTUC.¹ We, at the Boolaroo Church, were not notified in writing of this decision previous to November 13, 1989. There were telephone conversations between the then church clerks but NO written notification. The present church board acted only on the information we had, which, to say the least, was very limited.

2. April 13th, 1989. Letter to Pastor and Mrs. Cooke from the Boolaroo Church Board, informing them that their request for transfer was denied. This was five months after their request for transfer. A transfer [request] becomes void after three months. *Church Manual*, 45. There are two

¹ Trans-Tasman Union Conference

options: 1, To grant. 2, To refuse. [Pres.NNSWC] told us at the special board meeting, November 6, 1989, that Avondale did refuse by not replying. How unfair!

3. July 25th, 1989. The new Church Board requested a reply from Avondale Memorial re the Cookes' transfer. This was hand delivered to the Memorial Church clerk because, previous to this, I had difficulties with another transfer which was also obviously held up by the Memorial Church. But that's another story.

The Memorial Church replied in a letter dated July 30, 1989. The letter stated that "Pastor Cooke had *requested* that he conclude his discussions with the Union Conference brethren before he responds to those concerns at local church levels." This statement we found, in itself, was an untruth. A reply, written by Pastor Cooke to the Boolaroo Church board, stated, "[Pastor A] publicly said (in a reply to a request from the Cookes as to why their transfers were being withheld) that the local church was waiting for the TTUC to deal with Pastor Cooke and THEN they would do so."

4. July 4th, 1989. Boolaroo Church requested that [Pres. NNSWC] be invited to a business meeting to present the facts on Pastor Cooke.

August 4th, 1989. The Cookes wrote a letter requesting to be present at our next meeting as three meetings had taken place concerning them and they wished to speak on their own behalf. [The Pastor of the Boolaroo Church (Pastor B)] stated that it was not right for one side to be present and not the other.

September 20th, 1989. Boolaroo board moved a motion that [Pres.NNSWC, Pastor A], and the Cookes appear before our Church board within a reasonable time to let us know

WHY Pastor Cooke's transfer was being held up. Our Church Pastor was to arrange this.

None of these meetings ever eventuated. ✓

[Pastor B] approached [Pres.NNSWC] about appearing before our church board with [Pastor A] and Pastor Cooke. [Pres.NNSWC] told [Pastor B] that this was out of order and to leave everything alone between the Cookes and the Avondale Memorial. We were told, by [Pastor B], that if we wanted to know the facts to go and see [Pres.NNSWC] individually. One of our board members did go, and was told there is nothing morally or doctrinally wrong with Pastor Cooke.

Boolaroo Church members were so fed up with the deviousness of the church leaders that they decided at a duly called board meeting, and then at a duly called business meeting, to vote the Cookes into church membership on profession of faith. This was on October 23, 1989. [Pres.NNSWC] has since tried to say that the above were not duly called meetings.

On November 6th, 1989, [Pres.NNSWC] intervened. He verbally threw Mrs. Cooke from the board room. She had been invited by a majority of the board members. The satanic presence in that room and the threatening attitude of [Pres. NNSWC] frightened me so much that I was reduced to tears. Constantly I said to [Pastor B], "Stop him, he's evil," referring to [Pres.NNSWC]. I have never sensed such an evil force in the world, let alone coming from within the Church, in all my life.

5. Please note that on April 12th, 1989, before the new church board met, [Pastor B] spoke to [Pastor A] regarding the Cookes' transfer. [Pastor A] did not put any more light on the problem. He claimed that Avondale members had

raised questions concerning the Cookes. This was later shown to be false.

In [Pastor A's] letter to the present Church board, dated November 13, 1989, he stated that "he does not accept that Boolaroo Church had no knowledge of the Avondale Memorial Church board's action until 16th March, 1989, as I [Pastor A] was in constant touch with [Pastor B] over this matter." This shows that [Pastor B] was the one that deliberately withheld information from the Boolaroo Church board.

I put the motion of no confidence in [Pastor B] as chairman of our board meeting on October 23, 1989, because he had never levelled with any of us over the Cookes' transfer. It is true that he read bits and pieces from letters from his file on the Cookes, but these letters were never tabled so that we could read them in context. [Pastor B] also deceptively removed from me one of the three letters addressed to the church board from Pastor Cooke. This letter was never read to the board and has never been returned. (Later I received a copy from Pastor Cooke to include in the minutes.) Never once did [Pastor B] invite us to pray over this matter or take us to the Word of God or to the Spirit of Prophecy for counsel. The only thing that was used was the Church Manual, which is NOT inspired and which the Conference ignores when it is convenient to do so.

A number of times [Pastor B] said he would visit the Cookes to assess the matter. He never did. It was obvious that something was afoot. [Pres.NNSWC] informed the Boolaroo board that 'THEY' had been investigating Pastor Cooke for 4 1/2 years.

It was not until the question on the motion was called at our business meeting on October 23, 1989, when we accepted the Cookes on profession of faith, that [Pastor B]

shared with us a letter dated October 17, 1989, from the Avondale Memorial Church, stating that the Cookes were to be referred to the Avondale Memorial business meeting to be disciplined. This letter was not tabled nor included in the minutes. It appears that it was only [Pastor B's] desperation to prevent Boolaroo from receiving the Cookes that he revealed the contents of the letter. Because of this I moved that [Pastor B] be removed from the chair as he was not competent to handle the matter of the Cookes' transfer honestly and openly.

I am very confused as this is not my idea of how Christ would handle this. Someone will have to answer for what has happened to the Cookes. Who knows, in time similar treatment could be given to me. We live in a democratic country, but it appears that this privilege is taken away from us when we become members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

[Pres.NNSWC] told us that Boolaroo's action in receiving the Cookes will go to the Conference Session where the delegates will have to stand to answer on the Cooke issue. He clearly indicated that the church would be disbanded. He even tried to tell the board that Pastor Cooke had ruined lives by his meetings around the conferences. However, I know that Pastor Cooke upholds the true Adventist faith. (A little later, however, [Pres.NNSWC] said that he was prepared to provide a budget for Pastor Cooke to conduct public meetings!!)

One Board member said that she was willing to stand for the Cookes. [Pres.NNSWC] replied, "You could stand on your head for all I care." Statements like this, plus "that's the way the cookie crumbles" are, in my opinion, NOT befitting a Conference president. To add to the pressure of

forcing the issue when we could not come to a decision, [the church ministries director of the North New South Wales Conference] declared, when we decided on a season of prayer, "You can go away and pray if you want to, but you must come back with the decision to rescind," Doesn't this divorce God from the running of the Church?

[Pres.NNSWC] stated that "the real challenge does not involve Avondale or the Cookes, but the correct constitutional form of the Seventh-day Adventist Church." People do not matter all that much to [Pres.NNSWC], and he stated this clearly to the board. Are we saving people or saving face? . . .

The Assistant Pastor [of the Boolaroo Church], also played a part in deceiving the Boolaroo Church members by saying that if they rescinded the action of receiving the Cookes into membership, they could then vote them into membership in the proper manner. However, at the business meeting [Pres. NNSWC] gave no opportunity for this to take place. Members were angered by such deceptive tactics.

So the stage was set. Boolaroo, by a majority vote, rescinded the action of the previous business meeting to accept the Cookes on profession of faith. This meant taking their names off our records.

When the Cookes were received into membership on October 23, 1989, they then tendered their resignation from the [Avondale] Memorial Church. Boolaroo's action of rescinding them as members now left them out of church membership. However, [Pastor A] had refused to place the Cookes' resignation before the Church. [Pastor A], we now know, was intent in trying to punish Pastor Cooke for telling the truth about corruption and apostasy.

I have never seen such a biased, one-sided meeting as that last business meeting. I cannot understand how our leaders can sleep at night.

Please do not think that I have wanted Boolaroo to be a congregational church. We have already been accused by [Pres.NNSWC] of wanting this. After seeing the oppressive power of the hierarchy, it makes me wonder whether it may not be such a bad idea!

What I have given you are the basic facts of what occurred at Boolaroo Church. However, it is only the tip of the iceberg. So much has happened in this time that it sometimes makes me feel ashamed to be called a Seventh-day Adventist and to be connected in any way with such hypocritical actions.

Appendix B

Ignorance Alleged

DR. RUSSELL STANDISH'S ALLEGED IGNORANCE OF THE COOKE CASE

"I could read into this that you are very skeptical of the good reasons that the church has for its actions [in withdrawing Pastor Austin Cooke's ministerial credentials]. It may indicate that information you receive is only one-sided and that you do not know all the facts."—Letter to Dr. R. R. Standish from President Trans-Tasman Union Conference dated August 1, 1989.

"Russell, it never ceases to amaze me how you always seem to be so well informed and therefore write with great authority, in actual fact about matters, about which you know nothing."—Letter to Dr. Russell Standish written by the President of North N.S.W. Conference dated January 23, 1990.

Russell's knowledge of this case was based upon the following documentation, all of which is in his personal possession except that one item which is indicated by an asterisk. In that case, he has personally heard the tape:

DOCUMENTS:

1. Undated - Signed statement of Brother E.A. Allum, a member of Port Macquarie Church, concerning the alleged permissibility of lecturers at Avondale College for Adventists to eat prawns (shrimp).
2. Undated - Signed statement of Brother E.A. Allum affirming the fact that Avondale students went scuba diving and swimming on Sabbath.
3. Undated - Signed statement by Brother E.A. Allum asserting that the President of the North South Wales Conference assured him that he did not threaten Boolaroo Church with severance from the sisterhood of churches.
4. Undated - Signed statement by Brother E.A. Allum asserting that many students and workers from Avondale College drank alcohol at clubs and hotels on Friday evenings and that students played cricket on Sabbath.
5. October 1, 1987 - Letter written by Sister Mavis Cooke to the pastors and elders of Avondale Memorial Church expressing her concern over the church business meeting of September 27, 1987. She objected to the manner in which the meeting was conducted, including applause and ridicule for various speakers and what she termed the "larrikinism" of some of the elders. Following this letter Sister Cooke was removed as church organist and was not permitted to touch the organ again.
6. June 4.5, 1988 - Extracts from sermons preached by Pastor Cooke in Perth, Western Australia - prepared by Pastor Cooke's accusers as evidence against him.
7. October 15, 1988 - Extract from Pastor Cooke's sermon in Auckland, New Zealand prepared, for above purpose.
8. November 5, 1988 - Letter written by Austin P. Cooke and Mavis T. Cooke to the church clerk, Boolaroo Church,

requesting transference of membership from Avondale Memorial church to Boolaroo Church.

9. March 1, 1989 - Letter written by Pastor and Mrs. Cooke to the Church Clerk, Boolaroo Church, again asserting their desire to join Boolaroo as church members.

10. March 16, 1989 - Letter written by the membership clerk, Avondale Memorial Church, to the church clerk, Boolaroo Church, asserting that the request of the Cookes for transfer had been tabled pending investigations by the Trans-Tasman Union Conference.

11. March 28, 1989 - January 5, 1990 - Every action of the Boolaroo Church board concerning the Cookes' request for membership into the church.

12. March 28, 1989 - February 5, 1990 - Every action of the Boolaroo Church business meeting concerning the Cookes' request for membership into the church.

13. April 13, 1989 - Letter written by Pastor of the Boolaroo Church and church clerk of the Boolaroo Church to Pastor and Mrs. Cooke stating that the *Church Manual* guidelines did not permit them to accept Pastor and Mrs. Cooke as members of the Boolaroo Church upon profession of faith.

14. May 17, 1989 - Letter written by the senior Pastor of the Avondale Memorial Church to Pastor Cooke setting forth seven "concerns" that he had about Pastor Cooke and stating that these must be cleared up before Pastor Cooke's transfer of membership could be considered.

15. May 23, 1989 - Letter written by the president of the Trans-Tasman Union Conference to Pastor Cooke notifying him of the action of the Union Executive to withdraw Pastor Cooke's honorary ministerial credentials, asserting the reasons to be those listed in the letter of May 17, 1989 above.

16. July 4, 1989 - Letter written by Pastor Cooke to the

president of the Trans-Tasman Union Conference responding to the withdrawal of his credentials and refuting the charges.

17. July 12, 1989 - Letter written by Dr. R. Standish to the president of the Trans-Tasman Union protesting the withdrawal of Pastor Cooke's ministerial credentials.

18. July 30, 1989 - Letter written by the recording clerk, Avondale Memorial Church to the church clerk, Boolaroo Church asserting that the cause of the delay in the matter of the transfer of the Cookes was due to a request by Pastor Cooke to hold discussion until he had settled matters with the Union Conference.

19. July 31, 1989 - Letter written by the president of the Trans-Tasman Union Conference to Pastor Cooke responding to Pastor Cooke's letter of July 4.

20. August 1, 1989 - Letter written by the president of the Trans-Tasman Union Conference to Dr. R. Standish responding to Dr. Standish's objection to the withdrawal of Pastor Cooke's ministerial credentials.

21. August 4, 1989 - Letter written by Pastor Cooke to the church clerk, Boolaroo Church requesting that he and Mrs. Cooke be present at the next business meeting when their transfer was to be discussed.

22. August 4, 1989 - Letter written by Pastor Cooke to the president of the Trans-Tasman Union responding to the president's letter of July 31.

23. August 9, 1989 - Letter written by a final year theology student at Avondale College to Dr. R. Standish asserting that he and his fellow students were consistently taught that the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy were inaccurate.

24. August 1989 - Extracts from sermons preached by Pastor Cooke prepared by Pastor Cooke's accusers in order to support their accusations.

25. September 3, 1989 - Letter written by Pastor Cooke to the church clerk, Boolaroo Church, denying that he had requested the Avondale Memorial Church to delay the matter of his transfer. See letter of July 30 above.

26. October 19, 1989 - Letter written by the senior pastor of the Avondale Memorial Church to ALL members of that church stating the five charges levelled against Pastor Cooke.

27. October 23, 1989 - Letter written by Pastor and Mrs. Cooke resigning from the Avondale Memorial Church since they had been accepted into church membership of the Boolaroo Church.

28. October 29, 1989 - Letter written by the senior pastor and recording clerk, Avondale Memorial Church to the church clerk and the recording clerk, Boolaroo Church strongly rebuking the Boolaroo Church for accepting the Cookes into church membership by profession of faith and accusing the members of the Boolaroo Church of "Persistent refusal to recognize properly constituted church authority, or to submit to the order and discipline of the church." Further, the Boolaroo Church members were threatened with an official protest to the Conference executive committee.

29. November 6, 1989 - Letter written by the Ministerial Association secretary, Trans-Tasman Union Conference to Pastor Cooke setting out the procedural format of the proposed Avondale Memorial business meeting called for November 19 in order to examine the charges against Pastor Cooke.

30. November 7, 1989 - Letter written by Sister Mavis Cooke to the chairman of the board of Avondale Memorial Church asserting that since the Cookes had resigned their membership in Avondale Memorial Church, it had no jurisdiction over them. She based this upon the fact that "Avondale Memorial Church, 'The Caring Church,' [was]

illegally conducting a church trial on a 72-year-old pastor who has given 50 years of service to the denomination, who has done or said nothing against Avondale Memorial, and in fact is not even a member of that church!"

31. November 10, 1989 - Letter written by Armstrong and Partners, solicitors, to the senior pastor of the Avondale Memorial church pointing out the injustice in the proposed procedural format of the business meeting of November 19.

32. November 10, 1989 - Letter written by the president of the North New South Wales Conference to the senior pastor of the Avondale Memorial Church suggesting that the Avondale Memorial Church had been high-handed and arrogant in its letter of October 29 to the Boolaroo Church.

33. November 13, 1989 - Letter written by the senior pastor, Avondale Memorial Church to the president of the North New South Wales Conference exonerating himself of the charges in the letter of November 10 (see 32 above).

34. November 14, 1989 - Letter written by the president of the South Pacific Division to Pastor Cooke requesting him to rescind the statements he made concerning the president's doctrinal beliefs and to cease his "scandal-mongering".

35. November 15, 1989 - Letter written by Dr. R. Standish to Dr. D. Easthope, elder Boolaroo Church supporting the church's action in accepting the Cookes into their church by profession of faith.

36. November 17, 1989 - Letter written by the president of the Trans-Tasman Union Conference to Dr. R. Standish assuring Dr. Standish of his love for our church in Australia and his desire to see it prosper.

37. November 1989 - Statement signed by Brother Bert McMahon, Brother Sam Walters, Sister Kerry Harrison and Sister Joan Cuskelly stating that the president of North New

South Wales Conference did threaten the Boolaroo Church with disbandment if they did not rescind the action of the church granting the Cookes' membership.

38. November 1989 - Statement written by Sister Mavis Cooke concerning the church membership of Pastor and Mrs. Austin Cooke.

39. November 17, 1989 - Statement written by Pastor Austin Cooke fully answering the 5 charges laid against him at the proposed church trial to be held November 19.

40. November 28, 1989 - Letter written by Pastor Cooke to the president of the South Pacific Division replying to the president's letter of November 14. Pastor Cooke pointed out that the statements to which the president objected were made in private in response to questions and were not meant for general circulation.

41. November 29, 1989 - Letter written by Dr. R. Standish to the president of the New South Wales Conference objecting to his leading role in the rescinding of the membership of the Cookes from Boolaroo Church.

42. December 1, 1989 - Letter written by the president of the Trans- Tasman Union Conference to Pastor Cooke commenting upon the Cookes' resignation from the Avondale Memorial Church and inferring that if he had no church membership he could hardly expect to keep his ministerial ordination.

43. December 4, 1989 - Letter written by the president of the South Pacific Division to Pastor O.K. Anderson commenting on Pastor Anderson's complaint concerning the treatment of the Cookes.

44. December 1989 - Statement written by Pastor Cooke concerning the action of the president of the North New South Wales Conference which prevented the Cookes being

accepted into church membership in the Windsor Church of the Greater Sydney Conference.

45. December 7, 1989 - Letter written by the senior pastor of the Avondale Memorial Church to Dr. R. Standish commenting on Dr. Standish's letter to Dr. Doug Easthope of November 15, denying that he (the senior pastor) preached an apostate message on August 9.

46. December 7, 1989 - Extract of letter written by Sister Joan Cuskelly, board member of the Boolaroo Church, to the president of the South Pacific Division complaining about the manner of the conduct of the board meeting in which the church was threatened with disbandment.

47. December 13, 1989 - Letter written by Pastor Cooke to the president of the Trans-Tasman Union setting forth three cases of precedent where members of other Seventh-day Adventist churches were accepted into church fellowship by a second Adventist church in the South Pacific Division, upon profession of faith. (The authors know of one such instance in the United States.)

48. December 28, 1989 - Letter written by Dr. R. Standish to the senior pastor of the Avondale Memorial Church discussing the pastor's statement concerning the fallibility of portions of Scripture.

49. January 10, 1990 - Letter written by Sister M. Healy of Lowestoft church in England to the president of the South Pacific Division protesting the treatment of the Cookes whom she knew personally.

50. January 11, 1990 - Letter written by the senior pastor of Avondale Memorial Church to Dr. R. Standish explaining his view of Scriptural inspiration.

51. January 1990 - Letter written by Sister A. West and Brother G. Javis of the Lowestoft Church in England to the

president of the South Pacific Division protesting the actions against the Cookes.

52. January 14, 1990 - Appeal written by Brother R. Marks of the Dora Creek Church, North New South Wales Conference, to church leaders at Wahroonga and elsewhere providing evidence of gross apostasy at Avondale College and pleading for reform.

53. January 5, 1990 - Letter written by senior pastor, Avondale Memorial Church, to Dr. R. Standish emphasizing his view that the Bible contains discrepancies rather than contradictions.

54. January 21, 1990 - Letter written by Dr. R. Standish to the presidents of the South Pacific Division, Trans-Tasman Union, and North New South Wales Conference and the senior pastor of the Avondale Memorial church suggesting that in view of the sudden death of Sister Mavis Cooke the previous day and their involvement in the fact that she died as an outcast from her church, that each should consider resignation as an act of contrition.

55. January 23, 1990 - Letter written by Mr. D. Funnell, clerk of the Macksville Court to Pastor Cooke reporting that the coroner found, after autopsy, that Sister Cooke died of an acute myocardial infarction (heart attack).

56. January 23, 1990 - Letter written by the president of the North New South Wales Conference addressed to Dr. R. Standish accusing Dr. Standish of having no true knowledge of the Cooke affair.

57. January 24, 1990 - Letter written by Sister Kerry Harrison, church clerk, Boolaroo Church, to the president of the South Pacific Division protesting the manner in which the church members were treated by their Conference president and expressing shock to learn that church members have no rights in the church. (See Appendix A.)

58. February 5, 1990 - Letter written to Pastor Cooke by the president of the South Pacific Division expressing sorrow at Sister Cooke's death and stating that he was not involved in the matters related to the loss of church membership by the Cookes.

59. February 5, 1990 - Letter written by the president of the South Pacific Division to Sister M. Healy suggesting that Sister Healy could not easily get a correct picture of the problem in Australia from such a distance.

60. February 6, 1990 - Letter written by the president of the South Pacific Division to Dr. R. Standish rebuking him for his "vindictive and unwarranted letter" of January 21, and offering to return the letter if requested.

61. February 14, 1990 - Letter written by Dr. R. Standish to the President of the North New South Wales Conference pointing out that the writer had asserted nine statements of fact.

62. February 23, 1990 - Letter written by the President of the Trans- Tasman Union to Dr. R. Standish responding to Dr. Standish's letter of January 21.

63. February 28, 1990 - Letter written by Mrs. M. Healy of the Lowestoft Church, England to the president of the South Pacific Division setting out in some detail the rather full knowledge which she possessed of the Cookes situation.

64. March 7, 1990 - Letter written by the President of the North New South Wales Conference to Dr. R. Standish claiming that all nine statements of fact presented by Dr. Standish were false.

65. March 8, 1990 - Signed statement prepared by Brother James Price and Sister Ruth Price confirming the fact that Avondale College students went to the beach to swim on Sabbath.

66. March 8, 1990 - Letter written by Dr. R. Standish to the President of the Trans-Tasman Union Conference discussing the return of church membership to Pastor Cooke.

67. March 20, 1990 - Letter written by the President of South Pacific Division to Sister Kerry Harrison, church clerk of Boolaroo Church, referring her to the President of the Trans-Tasman Union.

68. April 3, 1990 - Letter written by Dr. R. Standish to the President of the North New South Wales Conference expressing surprise that he claimed all nine statements were false.

69. April 10, 1990 - Letter written by the President of Trans-Tasman Union to Dr. R. Standish replying to Dr. Standish's letter of March 8.

70. April 18, 1990 - Letter written by the President of Trans-Tasman Union to Sister Kerry Harrison, Clerk of Boolaroo Church expressing his desire that Pastor Cooke be brought into church membership.

71. May 20, 1990 - Letter written by Brother Max Johnson, leading elder, Windsor Church, to Dr. R. Standish stating how pressure had been placed upon the Windsor Church by church leadership to prevent the Cookes fellowshiping there.

72. June 13, 1990 - Letter written by Brother George Hill, first elder, Cessnock Church to Pastor Cooke, setting forth how church leadership had placed pressure upon the Cessnock Church to refrain from admitting Pastor Cooke into its membership.

TAPE RECORDINGS

1. 1989 - Videotape in which a Theology Department lecturer at Avondale College interviewed a number of college

personnel in order to counter Pastor Cooke's accusations against Avondale College.

2. 1989 - Videotape - lecture on the Sanctuary by a theology lecturer, Avondale College. In it he claims that the anti-typical day of atonement extends from AD 31 to the destruction of the wicked after the millennium.

3. August 9, 1989 - Audiotape recording of the pastor of the Avondale Memorial Church presenting a Prayer Meeting message in which he asserted that the Bible is part human and fallible.

4. September 14, 1989 - Audiotape of discussion between the president and the ministerial secretary of the Trans-Tasman Union Conference, on the one hand, and Pastor and Mrs. Cooke on the other.

*5. November, 1989 - Audiotape of Boolaroo Church board meeting at which the president of the New South Wales Conference threatened the board members over the Cookes' membership.

6. December 23, 1989 - Audiotape - sermon presented by Pastor O.K. Anderson in Boolaroo Church condemning the actions against the Cookes.

7. January 18, 1990 - Audiotape of the president of the Trans-Tasman Union Conference discussing with the Cookes concerning their lost memberships. At the conclusion Sister Cooke broke down and wept over her deprivation of church membership.

8. January 23, 1990 - Videotape of Mavis Cooke's funeral.

The reader is at liberty to make his or her own assessment of whether Russell Standish was fairly accused of protesting the Cookes' case without clear evidence of the facts.

Appendix C

Falsehoods Alleged

DR. RUSSELL STANDISH'S ALLEGED FALSEHOODS

Now Russell, you claim on pages one and two of your letter of 14/2/90 [February 14, 1990], that, "I did make a number of statements of fact. . . . Here are 9 clear statements I made." Because I did not take the trouble to answer the "9 clear statements of fact," you assume you are right. My dear friend, I don't ever answer "foolish and unlearned questions." Paul's counsel is to avoid them. The "fact" is that you don't make any "clear statements of fact." You make nine half-statements of fact which, in fact, add up to nine whole falsehoods. Not one statement you make represents the truth about which you speak. Russell, I don't even now intend to answer your statements. It is in fact none of your business. You don't know what you are talking about. Please take Paul's counsel and "study to do your own business." Your informants are not telling you the truth. — Letter written to Dr. R. Standish by the President of the North New South Wales Conference dated March 7, 1990.

The reader may judge the matter for himself. Below are the nine statements of fact to which the Conference President alluded. The reader may decide whether these are clear statements of fact or not. Further the documented evidence upon which each assertion of these facts was made is provided so that evidence is presented to establish whether these statements are false or not. The authors hold each of these documents personally.

The nine statements of fact as presented to North New South Wales Conference president were as below:

1. That Austin Cooke had lost his membership in the Adventist Church.

Evidence:

"It would be incongruous to have a person *who does not hold membership in the church* . . . to be considered as an ordained person." — Letter written by president of the Trans-Tasman Union written to Pastor A.P. Cooke dated Dec. 1, 1989 emphasis added

2. The president of the South Pacific Division had written to Pastor Cooke re his reported remark about the president's belief in the 27 Fundamentals.

Evidence:

"In Western Australia, you said, 'the president of the Division went to see this man who's teaching in a Catholic school [actually it was an Anglican school] and he tried to persuade him to come back and work for the church, and this man said, but "Oh, I'm into the new theology." And do you know what the president of the Division said to him. Oh, he said, don't worry, there are about eleven of the fundamentals I can't accept.' . . . I am requesting from you, no later than December 1:

“1. A letter to me in which you apologise for conveying false information and withdraw in specific terms the following allegations:

a. ‘that [the President of the South Pacific Division] said, “There are about eleven of the fundamentals I can’t accept,” or was involved in the incident quoted above” – Letter written by the President of the South Pacific Division to Pastor A.P. Cooke dated Nov. 14, 1989

3. That you threatened the folk at Boolaroo with disfellowshipment.

Evidence:

In fairness to the president of the North South Wales Conference, this fact was only inferred rather than specifically stated. But members accepted as fact that the threat to remove their church from the sisterhood of churches would automatically result in their disfellowshipment. The president of the North New South Wales Conference made the point that if the Boolaroo Church did not rescind its action of receiving into church membership Pastor and Mrs. Cooke, that he would take steps that could lead to the disbandment of the church. “We felt threatened by his action.” – Statement signed by Brother Bert McMahon, Brother Sam Walters, Sister Kerry Harrison and Sister Joan Cuskelly, Board Members of Boolaroo Church

4. That Avondale Memorial Church accepted the Cookes’ resignation.

Evidence:

“There is no doubt that the decision that you and Mavis made to resign your membership from the Avondale Memorial church a few weeks ago created a complexity of procedural

problems. I have not been personally involved too much with these except to urge the Union and the Conference to find some satisfactory way *to reinstate your membership.*" — Letter written by the President of the South Pacific Division written to Pr. A.P. Cooke dated Feb. 5, 1990 emphasis added. Clearly if the president was discussing reinstatement of membership then obviously Pastor Cooke's resignation had been accepted.

5. That the Boolaroo Church had accepted the Cookes into church membership.

Evidence:

"It was not until the question on the motion was called at our Business Meeting on October 23, 1990, when we accepted the Cookes on profession of faith, that [the Pastor of the Boolaroo Church] shared with us a letter dated October 7, 1989." — Letter written by Sister Kerry Harrison, Church Clerk, Boolaroo Church to President of South Pacific Division dated January 24, 1990

"It has come to the attention of the Avondale Memorial Church Board that at a meeting held on Monday night, October 23, *the Boolaroo church took action to accept Pastor and Mrs. Cooke into the membership of the Boolaroo Church on profession of faith.*" — Letter written by the Senior Pastor and the Recording Clerk of Avondale Memorial Church to the Church Clerk Boolaroo Church, Oct. 29, 1989 emphasis added

6. That a member of Avondale College Theology Faculty, chaired a video discussion concerning Pastor Cooke's ministry.

Evidence:

"On this video, I would like to make a response to Austin Cooke's address given some months ago in Perth." — Words

spoken by Theology Lecturer, Avondale College on videotape

7. That the pastor of Avondale Memorial church wrote a letter to the members of the Avondale Memorial Church citing perceived evils which he [Pastor Cooke] had committed.

Evidence:

“The Church Board is concerned about:

1. Pastor Cooke’s attack on the integrity of his fellow ministers.” *Letter written by the pastor of the Avondale Memorial Church to the members of the Avondale Memorial Church dated October 19, 1989*

Four other charges were laid. These are set out in the chapter, Unwanted Minister.

8. That the pastor of Avondale Memorial Church on August 9, 1989 preached in Avondale Memorial Church that part of the Scripture is always fallible.

Evidence:

“If you believe, on the other hand, that God gave the information and encouraged men to write it down, and saw to it that the message was conveyed correctly but that there is a combination of divine and the human in the Scriptures and the divine is always perfect and right and infallible but that the human is always fallible, one does not have problems.” — Audiotape, the Pastor of the Avondale Church preaching Avondale Memorial Church, August 9, 1989

9. That the Boolaroo Church had been threatened with removal from the sisterhood of churches.

Evidence:

“The feeling I picked up [at the Boolaroo Church Board Meeting, November 6, 1989] was very satanic and we

as a board were threatened if we did not rescind the motion to accept Pastor and Mrs. Cooke into fellowship that our church then we would be disbanded.” — Letter written by Sister Joan Cuskelly, member of Boolaroo Church Board to the president of the South Pacific Division dated December 7, 1989

“Later I was talking to Boolaroo Elders, Doug Easthope, Terry Branster, and Morrie Eckart. They were prepared to state an oath that [the president of the North New South Wales Conference] HAD threatened to disband the Boolaroo Church if they did not rescind the action on the Cookes membership.” — Signed statement by Bro. E.A.Allum of Port Macquarie Church

The president of the North New South Wales Conference “called a full Church Business meeting to rescind our membership. If this was not done, he threatened he would disband Boolaroo Church at the session — disband Boolaroo Church, established about 60 years ago, for accepting into membership a pastor and his wife who had been attending regularly for twelve months!” — Letter written by Sister Mavis Cooke to the chairman of the Board of Avondale Memorial Church, November 7, 1989

“Even with the threat by [the President of the North New South Wales Conference] of the disbandment from the sisterhood of churches hanging over our heads, I was still willing to stand for what is right and leave the consequences to God.” — Letter written by Sister Kerry Harrison, Church Clerk, Boolaroo Church to the president of the South Pacific Division, January 24, 1990

Appendix D

The Windsor Letter

LETTER OF LEADING ELDER, WINDSOR CHURCH,
GREATER SYDNEY CONFERENCE TO DR. RUSSELL
STANDISH DATED MAY 20, 1990.

Pastor A. Cooke asked me, as the leading elder of Windsor Seventh-day Adventist Church, to comment on the undue interference of [the president of the North New South Wales Conference] in his quest for church fellowship.

In December last year, Pastor Cooke rang me asking if he and his wife would be welcome to visit, and perhaps enjoy fellowship with Windsor Church again. Of course, I was delighted to invite them. The Cookes had pastored Windsor Church some years previously, so naturally I was pleased that they sought our church to enjoy Christian fellowship. Visitors and members are always welcome.

The Cookes' visit was mentioned to some of the elders. Most saw nothing wrong. However, one elder mentioned that [the president of the North New South Wales Conference] was in conflict with Pastor Cooke over some matter and he (the elder) must have contacted [the president of the Greater Sydney Conference]. I then received a call from the

president of the Greater Sydney Conference, telling me what a bad fellow Pastor Cooke was and that we should have nothing to do with him.

I respect [the president of the Greater Sydney Conference] but believe the Windsor Church members can manage their own affairs. Not being party to all the behind-the-scenes politics, I accept people as they are until I find out differently. It's hard to believe all the "bad" comments and criticism of the Cookes. A story usually has two sides, and not knowing either, I still invited the Cookes. Pastor Cooke appreciated my offer but thought that if his visit would cause any disruption he would rather not upset anyone. So in the end they did not come.

I find the whole episode rather saddening. To think that we welcome all sorts of "sinners" as visitors to our church, but invite someone who has apparently fallen from "grace," in the eyes of some leaders, [and this] warrants interference and pastoral pressure to prevent former members and a pastor from being able to fellowship with folk of like faith! Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that some are intimidated by those who speak the truth with clarity and call sin by its right name — time will tell. /

Brother Standish, should you find yourself in the same position as Pastor Cooke, be assured of a ready welcome at Windsor and the prayers of the majority of the folk there.

Appendix E

The Cessnock Letter

LETTER FROM FIRST ELDER, CESSNOCK CHURCH,
NORTH NEW SOUTH WALES CONFERENCE TO
PASTOR AUSTIN COOKE DATED JUNE 13, 1990.

It was a sad day for the Cessnock Seventh-day Adventist Church when our Conference president . . . informed the membership of the church board that it could not take you into its church membership on profession of faith because you had to first present yourself to the board of the Avondale church to answer to their inquisition and then to the membership for statements you have made in the past. Then to be told that [the president of the North New South Wales Conference] would have to take the Cessnock Church to a special session of the sisterhood of churches to be dealt with as a church in rebellion was to say the least, not what one would expect to hear from a Conference president.

This church has never been in rebellion to the truth, but is prepared to stand up for what it knows to be right. It pays an honest tithe, is supportive of Sabbath school, and has a worship service that is free from the excitement and charisma that is creeping into other churches. It is supportive to

the overseas mission work, runs Five Day Plans, Health Seminars, Cooking Demonstrations, Prophecy Seminars, Revelation Seminars and is conscious of its obligations to our community service outreach, and the work of ADRA. . . . the minister of Avondale Church was invited to attend this board meeting but refused to attend until he had the sanction of the president. God forbid the day when we shall have to ask the consent of anyone before we can stand up and give account of ourselves. Over the phone, [the senior pastor of Avondale Church] did tell me that the church had no complaint with the doctrine you preach or the moral standard you maintain, but with your methods. If your doctrine is correct and your moral standard is correct then I take it your methods must be correct, for they naturally must come under morality. I believe these same sentiments, as to your stand on doctrine and morality, were expressed to the church board of the Boolaroo Church by [the president of the North New South Wales Conference] when that church was considering taking you and the late Sister Cooke into their membership. It again was a sorry day for that church when it rescinded its motion that they had taken to accept both yourself and your late wife into its fellowship, under the same threat that was laid upon the Cessnock Church.

It was quite evident at the Cessnock board meeting that a determined effort had been made to silence you by the size of the dossier that [the senior pastor of the Avondale Memorial Church] had gathered against you, and particularly when it was aired that [he] had already said to your own daughter "that he was being sent to the Avondale Church expressly to get her father." To which she replied, "Don't hurt my mother."

Again it was also evident by the information passed on by the pastor of the Boolaroo Church . . . that the delay in handling your request for membership to the Boolaroo Church was inordinately delayed with the express purpose of having it dealt with by [the senior pastor of the Avondale Memorial Church], although this was denied.

Among the dossier evidence, [the senior pastor of the Avondale Memorial Church] admitted taking statements from audio tapes that had been sent to him of meetings held by you and had them transferred to a master tape to be submitted as evidence to his church members against you. The Conference president and the chairperson at the time did not make any stipulation against them, and as chairperson at the time, [the Cessnock Church pastor] acted unfairly and unjustly and partially when, at the request of [the president of the North New South Wales Conference], you were to present yourself at the Cessnock Church board meeting for consideration of your case. [The president of the North New South Wales Conference and the pastor of the Cessnock Church] wanted to see this business finished with at that meeting, that was blatantly evident, but at the insistence of a majority of the board, your application for membership was carried over until [the pastor of Cessnock Church] returns from his study tour in the Middle East. May God grant a correct solution.

Appendix F

Accused of Adultery

REPORT ON THE CASE OF PASTOR ACCUSED OF ADULTERY PRESENTED BY DR. ROBERT WILSON, DIRECTOR OF PASTORAL CARE AT THE REVIEW AND HERALD, APPOINTED INVESTIGATOR BY THE TEXAS CONFERENCE

This research has been done at the request of the Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists—to deal with a more complete investigation and understanding of the allegation made by a certain parishioner against a specific pastor.

These were serious allegations of sexual impropriety and were at the level of immediate exposure and with wide dissemination. This investigator took the project with the understanding that his information would be used, neither as a hatchet, nor as a coverup, but rather as a clarification and a corroboration of the allegations.

Request was made by investigator for complete freedom to talk with all parties and gain access to all information tapes, bills, and letters. Parties involved will be mentioned or named by initials. That is, Mr. & Mrs. B, Pastor D, Pastor V, Interviewer, Pastor O, and others.

The basic information was that Mrs. B had sought counsel from Pastor V at campmeeting, starting in May of 1986. The relationship by July began to take a form different from just a friendly involvement or counseling.

Mrs. B then made specific allegations that their involvement became sexual in August, continuing through November. She wrote specific letters to her local pastor.

After some months these letters indicated her involvement with Pastor V. This caused Pastor D, in late September, to phone the conference president stating that there were serious problems and asking that the conference president come to the district to discuss them with the pastor in person.

At the time of the visit, the conference president viewed and heard that information from Mrs. B to pastor D. The president, in turn, talked to Pastor V informing him not to talk to this woman at any time, because she was making serious accusations against him. This was early October 1986.

In the last week of November, the conference president called this researcher and said that the allegations were becoming quite intense and were about to be exposed and with dissemination amongst many people. He requested professional assistance in the case and asked this interviewer to become involved.

On arriving in the first week of December 1986 at the Texas Conference office, all parties were contacted that were involved. A series of interviews was set up with Mr. & Mrs. B, their local pastor, the tape interviewer, the conference president, and others were involved at whatever level.

The letters from the local pastor were brought in and he sat down and talked for some 3 1/2 hours with the researcher, pointing out specific areas and sharing what information he had.

Note! This pastor would not counsel her because he felt that the girl had serious problems in her identification with men and wanting a daddy or an older man to be a daddy. He would only see her with his wife or when someone else was present. He remained very discreet, but distant.

The next interviews were with Mr. & Mrs. B spread over three times and consisting of some six hours. Two of the interviews were individually with Mrs. B. Two interviews were made with the tape interviewer and a series of phone calls were made to gain access to the tapes.

Calls were then placed to others who had information and were threatening to disseminate it widely. This researcher found that all parties were very cooperative and with the promise of anonymity they talked freely, openly and quite candidly.

The letters were uniform and showed an internal consistency. The tapes balance out what they said and gave specifics as to what happened and when it happened. The investigation by the conference president with Mr. & Mrs. B bore out the same information. All information was basically consistent and retained substantial similarity in all content.

1. There is no basis, in fact, for the rumor that they stayed over night in a motel, a house or in any vehicle.

2. There is no verification that there were other women involved in the same way with Pastor V.

[NOTE—The section which followed has been omitted for it contains vivid details of the accusations and is unnecessary information for a book such as this]

Inasmuch as this researcher was not allowed to contact or talk to Pastor V, an appointment was set up for the Conference president and Union president to see him December 5 at 6:00 in the morning.

Pastor V totally denies the sexual involvement, does admit to talking with her, spending time with her, eating with her, meeting her in places other than the church, talking to her over the phone when the husband was not there, admitting to a special telephone signal ring. He also admits to talking to her in spite of the president's warning and continued talking to and seeing her.

He states also that he has a recreation vehicle and that he has a customized van which she speaks about. He admits to having a portable video camera which Mrs. B says he tried to use in taking pornographic pictures of her. He will not discuss where he has talked to her, claiming that to be irrelevant.

In summary, the evidence indicated a very definite relationship over an extended period of time with meetings in unusual unorthodox places. It indicates unwise and unprofessional counseling ethics. It indicates that the pastor was not willing to candidly deal with all aspects of the information. It indicates that the woman has a very serious problem and must continue in therapy with a different source.

There is no evidence of a clever scheme or mastermind to undercut or to do away with Pastor V as Pastor V claims. The woman does not indicate a schizophrenic condition as stated and shows no indication of being "under the influence of any drug or such." Statement by researcher.

The nature of these allegations is personal, and they are made on the part of a distraught woman who formed an intense relationship with Pastor V and who found the relationship not going the way she wanted, not finding the support, so seeking others to try and help her in the process of developing her Christian experience.

She neither wants to go to court nor have all the information spread or disseminated against Pastor V. Those who counsel with her, such as Pastor O and the tape interviewer, have been very cooperative and do not wish to see Pastor V destroyed.

This researcher finds that though there is not sufficient evidence to prove sexual intercourse on the part of Pastor V with Mrs. B, the evidence is quite conclusive that there was a relationship which indicates poor judgement and indiscretion in Pastor V's counseling process.

It is further suggested that Mrs. B. continue in personal therapy with others than Pastor V. It is further urged that Pastor V sit with somebody whom he can trust and deal with this situation fully.

NOTE: The researcher (investigator) of the case who did this summary (Dr. Robert A. Wilson) states that this summary was done before Mrs. Burrow took her polygraph test and before other evidence later came to light. The researcher also is of the opinion at this present time that there is credible evidence to prove sexual intercourse on the part of [the] Pastor with Mrs. Burrow.

NOTE: Dr. Robert Wilson, the Researcher of the case, was ordered by the Texas Conference president to begin therapy with Mrs. Burrow and to help her cope with what happened to her.

NOTE: Dr. Robert Wilson also tried to get a meeting together with [the accused Pastor], Mrs. Burrow, and her husband so that they could all forgive and forget the whole thing, but the conference would not allow it.

NOTE: Dr. Robert A. Wilson was the director of pastoral care at the Review and Herald Publishing Company. Fred and Claudia Burrow, *Unrighteousness Uncovered*, 23-26.